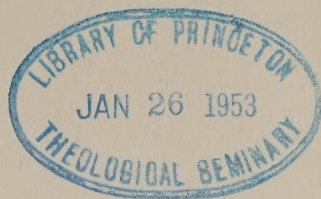


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GREAT HUMANISTS



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Lynn Harold Hough



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A Word of Introduction

THE PROFOUNDDEST biography is the study of a man's mind. A man always thinks things before he does them. The thought is the father of the act. And as thoughts become a great corpus of thought, they contain the very essence of the lives of men and of the life of civilization itself. So these studies of the thought of five great humanists—Aristotle, Cicero, Erasmus, Irving Babbitt, and Paul Elmer More—found their place quite simply and naturally in the Tipple Lectureship of Christian Biography at Drew University. To the invitation to deliver the 1952 series of lectures on this foundation established by President and Mrs. Ezra Squier Tipple I am indebted for the stimulus to prepare these studies and the opportunity to present them in lecture form to an appreciative audience.

Since 1925, when the book *Evangelical Humanism* similarly grew out of the Fernley Lecture at Lincoln, England, the interpretation of the relation of humanistic principles to the Christian religion has occupied much of my attention. Other lecture opportunities have resulted in books discussing various aspects of the subject: *The Artist and the Critic* (Samuel Harris Lectures at Bangor Theological Seminary, 1930), *Personality and Science* (Ayer Lectures at Colgate Rochester Divinity School, 1930), *Adventures in Understanding* (Cato Lectures in Australia, 1941), *The Meaning of Human Experience* (Southwestern University Lectures, 1945), and *Christian Humanism and the Modern World* (Chancellor's Lectures at Queens University in Canada, 1947). My own position was formally set forth in *The Christian Criti-*

cism of Life (1941), and its biblical basis and practical implications were considered in *The Dignity of Man* (1950).

The present biographical studies represent a fresh appraisal. There is no need to list the ninety-one volumes read in special preparation for their writing. Of course I have read works of Aristotle and Cicero, being deeply indebted to the Loeb Classical Library for them. And I have devoted a summer in England and Scotland to the study of Erasmus and his writings, and have re-read More's *Shelburne Essays* and *The Greek Tradition* and Babbitt's books. Many volumes of biography and interpretation have also been considered, but the opinions expressed in these studies are my own judgments and claim no support from other writers.

To the Library of the National Liberal Club in London and to the Library of the University Club in New York I am particularly indebted. And I wish to express very deep appreciation to President Fred G. Holloway of Drew University and to Dean Clarence T. Craig for courtesies extended to me at the time when the lectures were delivered, and indeed for the invitation to deliver them.

L. H. H.

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Aristotle

IN 1948 Dr. Frank Russell Barry, bishop of Southwell, published a profound and important book entitled *The Recovery of Man*. With something of the sound of a trumpet he declared:

The great task of the church in this savage era is the rehabilitation of Humanism.

With unhesitating decisiveness he said:

If the church is to play its true part in the redemption of this post-war world and not be overwhelmed beneath its ruins, it must be as the champion of man and the protagonist of Christian Humanism. . . . The redemption of civilization by religion and the pre-training for a Christian world-view in the great masses of our population by a revival of humanist culture may indeed be regarded as two moments in a single interlocked enterprise which is the task of this generation.

In an article entitled "The Christian Humanist" published in the *London Daily Telegraph* February 3, 1951, Dean W. R. Matthews of St. Paul's Cathedral wrote:

There are eminent Christian apologists who write as if Humanism were the enemy of Christianity and simply the supreme manifestation of human pride. Such indiscriminate denunciation, however, is unjust and dangerous. Surely the better course would be to show that there is a Christian Humanism which exalts the dignity of man while insisting firmly on his dependence on God.

These words by two eminent British churchmen well summarize the general position of the studies upon which we are

about to embark—a position which their author has been advocating for many years in volume after volume of study and argument and interpretation.

It is true that there is a humanism which sees an independent man getting along, as he thinks, quite well without God. But this does not represent classical humanism. In fact, both secular and nontheistic humanism have quite departed from the central stream of humanistic thought. The profoundest study of man leads on to a belief in God. And in this sense humanism in its most profound and perceptive forms is inevitably the handmaid of religion. It is a movement of thought which comes to its inevitable consummation and fulfillment in the acceptance of the facts and the sanctions of the Christian religion.

Without claiming the name for itself this humanism produced in Greece the richest and ripest culture the world had known, finding a certain definitiveness of expression in Aristotle. It was first an inspiration and then a many-sided interpretation of life and culture in the writings of Cicero. By the sixteenth century it had become completely self-conscious and had produced in Erasmus the prince of the humanists. And it is of the greatest significance that in the American Republic, many of whose characteristic forms of thought move in other directions, it has produced the many-sided erudition and criticism of Irving Babbitt and the living experience of the humanistic tradition, coming at last to a full acceptance of the religion of the Incarnation in the spiritual pilgrimage and the writings of Paul Elmer More. In surveying and analyzing the lives and writings of these five men we will come upon much, perhaps most, of what is significant in the story of the fertilizing stream of humanism as it has moved through the world.

I

Aristotle was born in 384 B.C. in the little town of Stagira, which was in Chalcidice and fronted the northwest region of

the Aegean Sea. His father, Nicomachus, we are told by Diogenes Laertius, resided with Amyntas, the king of Macedon, in the capacity of physician and friend. So was established that connection with the court of Macedon which proved so important for the career of Aristotle. His father belonged to a line of distinguished physicians, and so the habit of close observation and careful reasoning from observation was something in the very blood of the growing youth. There must have been much of rude and barbarous vigor and little of Greek urbanity as yet about the court of Macedon, and A. E. Taylor may be right in suggesting that here Aristotle developed something not much different from dislike of princes and their lawlessly masterful ways.

When he was seventeen years of age, Aristotle went to Athens and became a member of the philosophical school of Plato. He was connected with the Academy for twenty years until the death of Plato. Doubtless he felt—and not without ample justification—that he was in contact with the richest and most radiant intelligence in Greece during these years. He experienced the give and take of the most brilliant conversation in the world. He was guided in fruitful and many-sided ways of investigation and thought. And the Academy was suffused by a certain spiritual splendor which came from the personality of Plato himself.

Aristotle became interested in the collecting of books. Indeed it is said that he is the first book collector known to history. And we are told that he taught the kings of Egypt how to arrange a library. Plato called him the intellect of the school and, perhaps irked by his vigorous independence, is quoted as saying: "Aristotle spurns me as colts kick out at the mother who bore them." However, there is no doubt that Aristotle regarded his master with the greatest admiration and affection, and we are in a sense justified, I think, in saying that he regarded himself a Platonist to the end.

After the death of Plato ended the twenty years under his influence, Aristotle left Athens. One of his fellow students in

the school of Plato had been Hermias. By sheer ability and force of character this man had risen from slavery until he had become the ruler of Atarneus and Assos in Mysia. Here he surrounded himself by a little circle of Platonists. On his invitation Aristotle joined this circle and remained with them for three years. He married a near relative of Hermias and lived very much at the center of the small court. At the end of this period he went to Mytilene in the island of Lesbos, perhaps through an arrangement made by Theophrastus, another member of the Academic circle. Later writings make it clear that during this whole time he was busy with biological observations in this region.

Philip of Macedon was the son of the patron and friend of the father of Aristotle, whom he may have known when they were both lads. In any event, about 343 B.C., when his own son Alexander had reached the age of thirteen years, Philip asked Aristotle to come to the court and to become responsible for the education of the young prince. Aristotle accepted the invitation. He soon attained an influential position at the court of Macedon and was able to secure the rehabilitation of Stagira, his birthplace, where he was thereafter held in grateful remembrance.

He was saddened by hearing that his great friend Hermias had been captured by the Persians and tortured and crucified at Susa. The last words of Hermias had been: "Tell my friends and companions that I have done nothing unworthy of philosophy." No wonder Aristotle was eager to pay tribute to his friend.

But the main matter is that we can think of Aristotle as occupying for at least seven years the position of guide, philosopher, and friend to the young man who was to become Alexander the Great. It may be said with some confidence that the Greek side of the mind of Alexander was the creation of Aristotle. We may be sure that the young man became familiar with Homer and the Greek dramatists and that the philosopher who was to be the author of the great work on *Politics* had many

a discussion on the theory and practice of government with his young pupil.

But it was the Greek spirit in particular which Aristotle interpreted to the quick-minded prince. He became possessed with the idea that there could be no better use of power than to make it the means of the spread of Greek culture in the world. So it came to pass that one of the most important results of the conquests of Alexander was their defining share in making the mind of the world Greek.

To be sure, Alexander later came to be possessed by the idea of a fusion of the best elements in Greek and Persian life and character, with which Aristotle could not sympathize. But far more than the young prince who had so much hot barbarism in his blood may have realized, his mind was made the glad captive of Greece. It is said that during all his campaigns Alexander had a way of sending to Aristotle whatever could be of use to him in the vast enterprise of his research. As Alexander read Homer under the guidance of Aristotle, he came to think of himself as another Achilles. It is even said that he slept with a copy of the *Iliad* within his reach. It was during this time that Aristotle established a deep friendship with Antipater, who later as the regent of Alexander in Greece was to have a position of the utmost importance and whose friendship came to have many practical advantages for the philosopher.

With the death of Philip, Alexander came to full power, and not long after this Aristotle returned to Athens. He was now a seasoned man of the world, easily familiar with the ways of men in high positions of political power. His own interests had broadened and deepened; and, without ceasing to be a philosopher, he had become a man of the most cosmopolitan interest and curiosity. At the center of his life a certain glowing appreciation of moral loftiness and spiritual reality kept its place. But with this he was a very vigorous citizen of the country of actual and busy men, and of the world, where nature pursued its vast

and varied round of such activity as could well fascinate and engross the mind of the observer.

It is probable that Aristotle had been disappointed when the headship of the Academy was given to another person and that in many ways he felt himself moving from the lines which the Academy was now taking. In any event, in a grove associated with Apollo and the Muses, a place which had been enjoyed by Socrates himself, Aristotle secured control of a group of buildings and founded his own school which was to be known as the Lyceum. Here he walked about with his pupils, and from this habit, it has been suggested, came the name Peripatetics as applied to his school. He is said to have discussed abstruse subjects in the morning, and in the afternoon to have considered matters of a wider public appeal.

He formed his school into a kind of community, and some of its methods may have been echoed in the organization of aspects of the activity of universities in the Middle Ages. Great numbers of manuscripts were collected in what became perhaps the first of the really great libraries of the world. Alexandria and Pergamum took a leaf from Aristotle's book when it came to building up their great libraries. Aristotle's school possessed a number of maps and many specimens which came in for practical use when natural history was the theme of his discussion. The works of Aristotle which we now possess probably represent notes of lectures given in this period; and, as W. D. Ross has suggested, "even if we suppose that some of the spade work was done by his pupils," the thought and research involved "implied an energy of mind which is perhaps unparalleled."

The Lyceum was a center of such concentrated intellectual effort as fairly bewilders one's mind. Research, discussion, and the sharp, keen-edged work of intellectual analysis were brought together in a fashion not equaled before the time of Aristotle. Athens felt the vigorous and compelling impact of the process, and wherever there was intellectual activity the power of the Lyceum was felt.

All this time Alexander's vast career of victory and conquest was moving with breath-taking vigor. The hot-blooded barbarian was fighting the cultivated Greek in the mind of the young king. As he came to appreciate Persian qualities and those he found among men as he swept over the world, he began to dream of a synthesis vaster than that of which Aristotle had taught him to think. The heady wine of a mounting egotism increasingly possessed him. He was ready to become a god that he might more completely be a ruler of men. At times the wild fury of a nature never really tamed burst out in startling fashion. The cool and urbane Aristotle must have heard of many of these things with something like dismay. His own nephew Callisthenes was with Alexander as the historian of his activities and achievements. There was hot disagreement, not uninfluenced by wine cups, and the life of Callisthenes was brought to an end at Alexander's command. There is some ground for believing that Aristotle was involved in accusations brought before the hot-headed whirlwind of a king. But before they could come to a head, the career of almost magical energy and success was brought to an end and Alexander was dead.

Aristotle was now in a difficult position. He owed much to the support of Antipater, the representative of Alexander who was now away from Greece. He was doubtless popularly regarded as a man who owed much, if not everything, in the way of power and influence to the patronage of the king. There was, of course, jealousy of his almost lonely eminence in Athens; and when word of Alexander's death reached the city, Aristotle seems to have been caught in the wave of anti-Macedonian feeling which swept the city.

A charge of impiety—sufficiently absurd in itself and, oddly enough, based on a poem and an epitaph he had written on his old friend Hermias years ago—was made against him. Remembering the death of Socrates and not desiring the people of Athens to "sin twice against philosophy," Aristotle withdrew from the city and fled to Chalcis, which had been the home of

his mother. There Macedonian influence was strong, and he doubtless found loyal friends. But a disease from which he had been suffering pursued him, and in Chalcis he died in the year 322 B.C. He was about sixty-two years of age at the time of his death.

It is said that Aristotle was bald, that he was thin-legged, had small eyes, and spoke with a lisp. Diogenes Laertius tells us that he was conspicuous by his attire, his rings, and the cut of his hair. Ernest Barker sees in busts, which he believes to be authentic, "firm lips and intent eyes."

His will shows him to have been a man of gracious humanity. He directs the emancipation of several of his slaves, makes the others safe from being sold, provides for his relatives, and altogether reveals the kindly and affectionate quality of his nature. The bones of his wife Pythias are to be buried with him. Herpyllis, the mother of his son Nicomachus, whose steady affection he holds in good memory, is well provided for. And careful plans are made for his children. As Ernest Barker insists, there was something more in Aristotle than the light of a pure intellect. More than once attention has been called to a fragment coming, it is thought, from the later part of his life, in which he says: "The more I find myself by myself and alone, the more I have become a lover of myth." That which could not be included in mere catalogues of careful observation and thought about them was increasingly precious to him. And the fact that he regarded the life of contemplation as the highest life of all reveals much as to the inner quality of his mind.

We cannot think of a man of his activity and energy as an ascetic. And the vastness of his intellectual achievement and the clear serenity of his mind certainly do not suggest the life of a voluptuary. He saw everything. Nothing escaped his attention. And in his life, as in his thought, he kept his eyes fixed upon that golden mean which provides safety from those bitter extremes which so disfigure human life. He had known and had been inspired by the rarest spirit of his time. And while in many things

he went his own way, he never ceased to feel the power and the definitive influence of that long and memorable experience.

One world was coming to an end and another was in process of being born during the period of the life of Aristotle. He felt the full impact of Attic thought and culture at its best. He knew more than most of his influential contemporaries of the life of Macedon from within. The rich, and often mutually hostile, currents of the life of his time flowed right into his mind. Patiently and eagerly he sought to understand them all. What the experience meant to him and to the world we shall in some measure see as we go on.

Even at the point which we have reached, it is a matter of great significance to project our minds forward and to see that when a new religion and a new culture sought a frame for vast forms of thought and interpretation, it was Aristotle who gave to Thomas Aquinas the mind with which he surveyed and organized the many-sided elements of Christian faith and life and thought. Whenever the mind of man has been keen and alert about its great tasks, it has owed much to Aristotle. And when it has broken from him, it has been in the name of a type of criticism which he himself had made possible.

When he lived in the world, he was the sort of man to have devoted friends and unhesitating foes. Isocrates may have given voice to powerful hostile attitudes. And Isocrates was no mean antagonist. But if Isocrates kept in close touch with the mind of Aristotle, he must have realized how much they had in common.

Indeed, if any contemporary made a contribution of his own, it is not much of an exaggeration to say that he had to begin with something which he may well have received from Aristotle. From many a hint in his writings we feel how much we would like to have a more detailed knowledge of the ways of his speech in the quick give and take of the earlier life of the Academy or the mature life of the Lyceum. We would be glad to overhear his conversations with the young Alexander and to feel the impact of the mind of the philosopher upon the vast vitality of

the young prince. From a phrase here and a flashing insight there we do come to some sort of understanding of the quality of the mind which, from being the schoolmaster of Alexander, moved out to be the schoolmaster of the world. As we study the works which he left behind him, we shall follow almost endless trails of masterful thought, and once and again behind the thought we shall feel the quality of the man.

II

Sir Richard W. Livingstone in his fascinating book *The Pageant of Greece* says of Aristotle:

His achievement is indicated by the fact that no modern book on him treats satisfactorily alike his scientific and his philosophical and political works. Aristotle covers a wider field than the modern writer can command. He belongs to that finest and rarest type of human intellect in which the great humanist and the great man of science meet.

It is not hard to see that back of this amazing diversity of interest and capacity for observation and thought there is on the part of Aristotle a tremendous faith in the power of the human mind. He is able to transcend even the mental reach of most men because of a stout and undaunted conviction that the mind of man was made for the finding and the understanding of every sort of truth. This we may indeed describe as the fundamental postulate back of all his work. And this is the faith of the humanist. The mental activity of Aristotle is an example of the humanist in action.

It has truly been said that man first discovered his humanity in Athens. We behold him standing quite upright, facing his world with a conviction that it is made to be understood by his mind and that his mind is made to understand it. He is not caught in the clutter of things. He is not overwhelmed by contending ideas. He stands at the place of understanding and of mastery. And in a very definite sense his mind is king.

These things are often implicit rather than explicit. Sometimes

they are assumed rather than said. They were gradually achieved through a great variety of mental experience. But they lie at the basis of every characteristic achievement of Greece. Without them Aristotle would be helpless in the presence of the manifold world of thought and existence which he confronts. Socrates had believed in the examined life. Plato had believed in a transcendent reality. Aristotle, fed by these and by many others, set about the task of examining all thought and existence, using a mind which it had become the very Greek genius to trust.

There has been much discussion about certain problems connected with the works of Aristotle. Cicero spoke of the golden flow of his language. And Quintilian wrote of the sweetness of his style. One would scarcely associate any of the remaining writings of Aristotle with such characterizations. We know that Aristotle wrote many dialogues which have been lost. These may have been responsible for the above characterizations. Indeed, it has been suggested that Plato wrote brilliant popular works which have remained and more technical works which have been lost, while Aristotle wrote technical works which have remained and popular works which have been lost.

Grote has an interesting account of the vicissitudes of the library of Aristotle, which, it is assumed, included his own works. It came first to Theophrastus, then to his friend and pupil, Neleus, who took the library from Athens to Skepsis. Here it remained for the greater part of two centuries, at one time concealed in a cellar. After 150 years the library was sold for a large sum to an Athenian named Apellikon, who was attracted by the Peripatetics. Under his direction new copies were made and corrected. When Sulla captured Athens in 86 B.C., he carried the library to Rome, where Cicero may have seen it.

Probably the writings of Aristotle which are now lost were in the great library at Alexandria, and so widely read in the ancient world. So the dialogues may have been largely circulated, for in some fashion Cicero had found access to the *Protrepticus* which was a model for his own *Hortensius*.

We turn now to the extant works. Thomas Case held the interesting view that Aristotle was gradually writing them for some thirty-five years. "However early Aristotle began a book, so long as he kept the manuscript he could always change it." These insertions over a long period of years would account for differences in style and in thought.

Werner Jaeger in a very brilliant piece of criticism attempts to use remaining fragments of Aristotle's earlier period as a means of judging the contents of the remaining groups of writing and so discovering the fashion in which the mind of Aristotle developed. Sometimes Dr. Jaeger is rather overadroit, and perhaps his conclusions should be considered somewhat critically. It is, in any event, clear that the remaining writings of Aristotle show us his mind at work and give us a picture of his mental activity, which is of the greatest possible significance. In dealing with the authorities it is always necessary to remember the subtle fashion in which a man's own interests will make themselves felt in his interpretations.

Aristotle had at his disposal that which had been thought and written, that which had been observed, that which had been discovered, that which had been expressed in many a swift-moving and flashing conversation with his contemporaries in the great tradition which in one way came to a tremendous climax in his own work. This sense of being a part of a great intellectual tradition is a part of his essential humanism. In respect of all these matters what he assumes is often more important than what he says, though what he says has implications which are far-reaching enough. It must be said that he uses this intellectual tradition with complete loyalty and with a profound sense of its dignity. It has been left for another type of thinker to use the mind to attack the mind, to make the intellectual tradition a means of attacking that tradition itself. It is, of course, when men lack a sure and critical intellectual discipline that such odd proceedings become possible. When men use their minds incidentally and depend upon their emotions essentially, the

results are likely to be rather confusing. But the mind ought not to be blamed for the results. When mechanical formulas are used to discredit the action of free minds, the intelligence may well seem to sit uneasily upon its throne. But the intelligence is not to be held responsible for this misuse of its own energies. We must always recover the faith in the mind which characterized the great days of Athens if we are to become capable of really creative intellectual activity. It is in this sense that we can call Aristotle not only the master of those who know but the master of those who know how to use their minds.

III

The study of logic is inevitable if one has some sort of faith in the mind. For logic has to do with the right use of the mind. When it is complete, it is a thoroughgoing discussion of mental method. W. D. Ross takes a very high line when he declares that in logic Aristotle "may fairly claim to have had no predecessor, and for centuries no worthy successor." The second part of the statement is doubtless true, but it is scarcely possible to say that there had been no productive study of the method of using the mind before his own. He was, however, the logician par excellence. And much, if not most, of what he did in the field has not needed to be done over again. His logical treatises are usually referred to by the name *Organum*, which sees them as an instrument for thought.

It is not necessary, for our purpose, to go into any detailed analysis of his work in this field. What is important is to see that he made a fairly microscopic investigation of the mind at work. The study of the syllogism was his own particular achievement. In a way, the whole work was a vast enterprise in clarification. What men had done without critical inspection he enabled them to do with complete and self-conscious understanding. The nature of assumption and the nature of deduction came in for complete and definitive study. And the ways in which the mind can go wrong were set forth with singular penetration. For cen-

turies Aristotle taught students how to think in coherent and dependable fashion. And his central insights are as important for us as they were for his own students.

Certain principles are so deeply involved in his logical discussion that they may be said to be of its very essence. There is the constant assumption that a man may use rightly or misuse the logical process. The whole study is indeed a method of showing a free mind how to go right and of preventing a free mind from going wrong. Logic could only be studied by a free mind analyzing its own processes. Everything is based upon a sense of the importance, indeed of the kingliness, of the free mind in action. The implicit appeal is always for the right use of free intelligence. You may go right in this fashion. By all means do it. You may go wrong in this fashion. By all means avoid it. So Aristotle is always speaking. And this appeal to free and responsible intelligence is at the very center of the humanistic position. Never is Aristotle more a humanist than in the construction of his logic. It is important to see that to Aristotle logic did not belong within his classification of the sciences as theoretical and practical and productive. Logic was not one of them. It was at the basis of all of them. Without it every science would fall to the ground. With it every science could do its work with good hope of success. The free mind investigating and thinking and deciding is at the basis of every activity which leads to any sort of dependable knowledge.

Now knowledge could come as the mind reasoned from principles to conclusions. In doing this it was deductive. It could be the result of rising from facts to positions which included them all. Then it was inductive. The logical analysis of Aristotle had to do for the most part with deductive reasoning. He saw the problem of reaching conclusions after an observation of some of the facts or many of the facts or most of the facts. Only when the last relevant fact had been found and considered could the induction be absolutely secure. Short of that you had a kind of higher probability. And it is very interesting that so much of

what we would call the scientific work of Aristotle had to do with just this realm of higher probability. He had an endless appetite for the collection of facts. He was always inspecting them to see in what direction they pointed. He knew when conclusions were tentative. And he knew when, although theoretically short of demonstration, they led to positions which were practically certain.

The question as to whether he was ever caught in an intellectual trap by his own genius for deduction will arise as we go on. And at certain points it will have very definite importance. Here I only remark that the creation of such a stupendous instrument of investigation was one of the supreme achievements of the human mind. There were doubtless questions in respect of the theory of thought and knowledge which Aristotle did not raise. But without his work that which followed century by century after him would have been impossible.

IV

The classification of the regions about which we can have knowledge—the sciences, as we should say—represented so effectively a part of the work of Aristotle that many of his distinctions and many of his terms remain in use today. Even in investigating the physical order of the world he is always moving along lines which transcend the mechanical and enter the region of purpose. He places tremendous emphasis on movement. But it is movement which has qualitative as well as quantitative meaning.

His conception of matter and form reveals an advancing process in which what was form at one stage becomes matter at the next, and so on and on. His analysis of causes; the material which is the substance used; the formal which is the object itself; the efficient which turns the material into the object; the final which is the purpose for which the object is to be used—each moves quickly from the realm of mechanics to the realm of purpose. Wood is the material of which a house is to be built,

and so it is the material cause. The design of the particular house is the formal cause. The activity of the builder is the efficient cause. And the purpose for which the house is built, say to be a human dwelling, is the final cause. Here we have a world of physical relationships. But here we have a use of these relationships for ends which clearly transcend the mechanical. When Aristotle is dealing with the realm of matter all the way through to the heavenly bodies, he always finds something beyond mechanical relationships. And this something makes even his analysis of inorganic nature a humanistic process. His theories must fit with certain observations and conceptions of his time. And here there is often inadequacy enough. But the whole process has meaning. This Aristotle never doubts. On this implicitly and explicitly he insists. But meaning is discovered in the process by the human mind. And it is not far from this insight to the conclusion which is inevitable when once the matter is inspected: that what the mind discovers in the process, mind put into that very process. Clearly Aristotle is on the edge of great matters.

V

In biology Aristotle uses his capacity for collecting facts, observing them, and arriving at conclusions about them with brilliant power. W. D. Ross quotes Darwin as saying of him: "Linnaeus and Cuvier have been my two gods, though in very different ways, but they were mere schoolboys to old Aristotle." Both in respect of his achievement and in respect of his limitations the biological work of Aristotle is full of interest.

But, from our standpoint, most important of all is the constant assumption that living things in their relationships and in their growth and functioning possess that which answers to the powers and the qualities of the inquiring mind. Living nature is constituted and conducts itself along lines which answer to the very expectations of observing and interpreting intelligence. The biology of Aristotle represents the conducting of an enterprise

which clearly belongs to the world of humanism in action. But most important of all is the teleological aspect of the biological work of Aristotle. He is always seeking purpose. He is always finding purpose. Once he uses the phrase, "God and nature do nothing at random." It is not good enough to say that this is merely a concession to popular ways of thought. And it is clearly not good enough to suggest that Aristotle seems content with a purpose which is not the purpose of any mind. He may not carry the processes of his thought to their ultimate conclusions. And when guided by other interests, he may declare positions which seem to contradict what is here involved. But the whole process of his biological thinking is left hanging in the air unless we at least move from the purpose which is in the process to the mind which put it there.

In all the varied aspects of his thinking, as we shall see more and more, Aristotle is engrossed with the endeavor to find a potential quality which becomes actual. This is his *entelechy*. And here again you find it necessary to ask the source of this conception. It clearly goes beyond what we would call the impersonal. There is always, everywhere, a great plan in Aristotle's mind. Whatever he is studying, he looks for traces of this plan. He watches lynx-eyed for evidences of its presence and its fruition. And one can see that the plan requires a planner.

It was because theology found its own great sanctions necessary for the completion of the thought of Aristotle that Thomas Aquinas found such kinship between his own mind and that of the great master of those who know. At every point Aristotle is bringing human intelligence to bear upon his problems. All the while he is depending upon the laws of the human mind. And if we open the right door, we come into a region where it is seen that the laws of logic written in nature and in the mind of man require a great Master of Logic who placed them there. Aristotle does not see the end of his journey, but he is on a high-way which leads to a great destination.

VI

Aristotle is interested in everything which has relation to the soul and the body and the active mind. The matters which have to do with nutrition hold his attention. He pays attention to all the aspects of sensitivity. He comes to a sharper attention when he surveys the rational processes of the soul. Using a characteristic distinction, he sees in mind itself form without matter. Sometimes the mental and the physical functions become a little confused in Aristotle. Problems which were to be more sharply seen in later centuries are clearly involved in his discussion. In a sense you feel at times that he represents the trunk of the tree before the branches representing idealism and realism have separated. He does make assertions which can scarcely find themselves permanently at home in any other than an idealistic form of thought. It would be unfair to claim his authority for positions which have not yet clearly emerged. But the thought which is quite independent of the body and the active reason which is so important to Aristotle clearly belong to the deepest humanistic tradition. And here we have great areas of possibility which go beyond any actual assertions of Aristotle.

If we pause to consider those activities of Aristotle to which we have been turning our attention, we see a most active and curious mind deeply believing in its own powers and sharply aware of the possibilities and limitations of the logical process coming to grips with the inanimate world, with animate creation, and with those rational processes which come into clear view with the emergence of man. At every point Aristotle sees material to which form is given. It is the very genius of that which is matter at one stage to become form at the next. It all becomes a tremendous process to which we would now give the name evolution. There is purpose everywhere. And this purpose, as we shall later see, becomes the very goal of the universe itself. Did Aristotle stand back and see that it was because he was a creature capable of purpose that he found purpose everywhere? Did he realize that always in the human he found the clue to

that which was beneath the human? In any event, all this was implicit in his whole work and was active in every stage of his process of observing and understanding.

Of course it was possible to take the results of the thought of Aristotle and to use them without giving them the very basis without which they would have been impossible or following them to the very conclusions which their critical use makes inevitable. It was possible to move away from the highroad of humanistic thought into byways where the true meaning could be completely lost. Because he was a man of his own age and inevitably shared in some of its limitations, some of his statements of course gave encouragement to thinkers possessed of a restless desire for the byways. But if we follow the central insights as we see clear intelligence using its own processes with disciplined understanding and surveying and interpreting its world, we shall see the sanctions and the ways of interpretation becoming commanding which belong to the humanistic apprehension of life.

And as we survey Aristotle's scientific activity, certain matters will come within our ken which will turn out to be of the utmost importance. While he is analyzing the mind, he thinks of the mind. But when he begins to observe and classify and interpret the ways of nature, he thinks of that which is being observed and not of the powers which he is exercising in conducting the observation. We must always keep Aristotle himself in mind if we are to do justice to the whole phenomenon of his activity. All too often in the history of thought men have forgotten their own active intelligence and have allowed their thought of reality to contract to the mechanical limits of the areas of existence which they were observing. If such a man says, "I do not find active intelligence in the universe," the answer is that he brings active intelligence with him every time he begins to observe, and he exercises active intelligence whenever he sets about the task of interpreting. You cannot understand the world of Aristotle and leave Aristotle out. You cannot

understand the world with which the scientist deals and leave the scientist out. For not quite the reasons which Dr. Sarton assigns he is quite right in seeing science as humanism in action. Dr. Sarton is not quite conscious of all the implications of his own position. But it is completely true, to speak in modern terms, that whenever you have a scientist at work in a laboratory, you have already transcended the uniformities with which he deals. If modern definition of science as the measurement of the measurable by the use of instruments of precision or by their equivalent is true, it is also true that when you attempt to interpret the whole process, you must always include the measurer. And in the case of Aristotle you learn more from the observation of the active intelligence of Aristotle himself at work than you do from any of his objective observations. Fortunately his own work was done both from the standpoint of the observation of the observer and from the observation of the world in which the observer lived. And so it is easier to see the centrality of humanism in the interpretation of his work and of the universe which he observed.

VII

With Aristotle there is a series of realities, and we can follow his conception of their gradation. It is important to see that for him the idea exists in the thing and not apart from the thing. We must not try to think of the thing apart from the idea or of the idea apart from the thing. But it is yet true that, while the material involves form and the form fulfills the meaning of the material, the last stage of the process is pure form. Here we have the uncaused cause to which we may give the name of God. Here we have the unmoved mover which is responsible for all motion. Here we have the Absolutely Spiritual containing no quality of the corporeal. Here we have the final cause which by its own worthiness makes inevitable the fulfillment by a desire which reaches eternally toward the unmoved mover. Here we have the ultimate position of Aristotle in respect of a theory of reality,

or, as we should say, the ultimate metaphysical position (using the word said to come from the fact that Aristotle's treatment of these things comes after his discussion of physics: hence, metaphysics).

It is clear that with all his sense of logical completion Aristotle moves rather uneasily in his theory of ultimate reality. His system of deductive logic is on the throne. And he can scarcely be said to resolve the difference between the material and the spiritual or between quantity and quality by more than a figure of speech. He secures a certain logical coherence in relation to his own terms at the expense of a profound dealing with the problems involved. There is really a great gulf which he never succeeds in crossing. The ghosts of the problems of Plato's universe of ideas are always present. And Aristotle's deft logic evades rather than solves the problem. So thoroughly do the deeper processes of his reasoning demand a living God making his will effective that the most brilliant theology of the Middle Ages was inclined to read into Aristotle what it would have been difficult actually to find. All his shrewd and skillful play with terms defined in his own apt way, and all his satisfaction with a logic which at last becomes more verbal than real, cannot quite hide the fact that his last step in synthesis requires something which he is not able to give. The constant method of Aristotle in falling back upon facts upon which to base his generalizations fails him here. He can only attempt to find an ultimate generalization which will answer to the logical necessities of his whole argument. Actually, in order to be effective his Unmoved Mover must come to possess all the qualities of living personality lifted to the highest power. The logic which does its work by a perpetual process of abstraction must be brought sharply back to the concrete and the actual. Aristotle is caught in the trap of his own logical forms. There are indications that he was not without an understanding that the thought of God must have a richer connotation than the abstract processes of his logic made pos-

sible. And he often uses phrases which at least throw out hints in the direction of their greater richness.

It is not too hard to pierce the formal logic of Aristotle. The sense in which the material can be drawn by the cords of love to the desire of that which belongs to the purely spiritual and so accept a causation which it itself causes presents difficulties which may well be said to involve impossibilities. There must be a dynamic and not merely an abstract relation. And this is true of every stage of the process. There is actually no place for teleology in a purely material universe. Matter can become form only through an actually dynamic relationship. You are merely playing with words unless you see that the final end, the purpose, has meaning and actual power only if it is conscious intelligence exercising dynamic energy. The great and conscious Planner is necessary to every stage of the plan.

And this is not to say that the great structure of Aristotle's metaphysics was unimportant. It is only to say that it required for its completion a great deal more than ever came within the purview of Aristotle's mind. He laid a great foundation. And he left it ready for a building which he did not erect.

To be sure, he had within his reach materials which he might have used. It was clear to him that thought is not material. All his work was done on the assumption that the thinker can and does control not only thoughts but actions. And here we have all the material for a human causation which exists not merely as an abstraction of thought but as a veritable reality of action. The purpose is the purpose of a living person. And if this is true of human action, the principle goes on to that ultimate universe which Aristotle was so eager to understand. Teleology is real in the whole universe because the purpose is the purpose of an ultimate living being who works out in all his creation the fulfillment of his plans. His action is perpetually dynamic. At every instant he controls the universe which he had made and moves it toward his own ends. He is not the

ultimate satisfaction of an abstract logic. He is the ultimate reality in living experience. The methods of his control may be hidden from the minds which he has created, but they are real nevertheless. He is not dependent upon the world of beings to move after him with an inevitable activity for which he is responsible though he is really unable to act upon it or through it. He is the ultimate actuality of living action. He is the master and controller of the universe which he had made.

Only by such positions as these are the insights of Aristotle saved from fading away in a realm of ghostly abstraction. No wonder that Christian thought by a right of eminent domain has completed the thought which without this completion will ultimately lose every element of significance. It is simply necessary to erect this building upon the foundation which Aristotle laid. If he had followed the clue of human experience a little further, his whole understanding of metaphysics would have been transformed. As it was, he made it inevitable that others would take the steps which he himself failed to take. A man is never more truly an Aristotelian than when he follows the deeper logic of Aristotle's thought in such a fashion that his own great edifice of understanding is given conclusive completeness.

VIII

The universal range of the mind of Aristotle inevitably included the field of ethics. And he is very much a humanist in his insistence upon rising from the life of nutrition and sensation which man shares with the beasts to the life of reason which is definitely his own and which makes possible that life of understanding and choice without which ethics would be impossible. The highest which the reason can apprehend is the good, and it is in loyalty to this goodness that man fulfills his true end and so is most a man. His actual happiness can be found only in the pleasure which he takes in that which is highest in his nature and so must be pleasure in the good.

To be responsible man's action must be voluntary; and so, though Aristotle does not make the matter one of major dialectic, he is clearly on the side of freedom of choice.

He is unhesitating, too, about the relation of ignorance to the claims of responsibility. He is shrewd and wise and even witty in analyzing the virtues. He sees the ultimate good in intellectual contemplation. And the life which clears the field for this is the good life. In dealing with ethics there are always extremes to be avoided and a middle way to be followed. And here comes Aristotle's famous doctrine of the golden mean. He has subjected ethical problems to the analysis of a keen and sensible mind. And through all his subtle dialectic he keeps in mind the commanding rights of the good life. His shrewd practicality combines with his logical skill to produce a doctrine of the good which is singularly impressive and which does not lose its power to command the respectful attention of men.

One is always impressed in reading Aristotle by the fashion in which he raises issues which will involve centuries of discussion. It is very difficult to deny that he asks most of the important questions, even if one cannot assert that he provides all of the answers. In writing of ethics he is sharply aware of every element of the life of his own time. And he brings to that life qualities of moral apprehension which lift it to new levels of understanding.

That he bases all his ethical thought upon distinctions concerning whose validity he feels a deep security is very clear. This is indeed true of all of his thought. He conducts every argument through the use of distinctions which he carefully analyzes and which, as it turns out, carry him very far. You feel at once that by the very genius of his mind he is the foe of those pseudo-unities in which the great distinctions are lost in a haze which makes it quite impossible to be sure about anything or to make any statement with any sort of logical or other finality. The moral distinctions are capable of adjustment to living experience. They are living experience in a living way.

But this does not mean that they are robbed of dependable meaning. In fact, it is just because they have secure meaning that they can meet the test of varying situations without being lost at last in a meaningless relativity. And here, too, he moves in what will in the course of centuries become the deepest way of the humanistic tradition. His belief that a man can come to apprehend a goodness to which he can be loyal is at the very basis of the ethical life.

The middle way has always possessed great attractiveness to the humanist. Extremes have a quality of throbbing excitement. But it is an excitement on the way to moral and intellectual disintegration. The distinction between the classical and the romantic holds in morals as well as in aesthetic taste. But the experience of the middle way does not lead to a life robbed of glowing pleasure and rich color. Aristotle is careful to point out that the moral life comes to its own when we take pleasure in the good. He does not believe in the abolishing of desires. He does believe in the disciplining of desires in the name of their own true fulfillment in the good life. The life of choice is kingly. The life of surrender to the sheer rush of energetic desire is the life of the beast and not the life of man. He does not possess reason for such uses as this. And the knowledge without which the good life cannot be understood or effectively followed itself requires the wise and disciplined use of the intelligence. The very writing of books on ethics presupposes the sternly careful and yet happy use of a mind capable of searching for moral truth and a mind capable of finding it.

Thus Aristotle is always keeping in mind moral experience and the principles through whose use we come to understand this experience and its proper fulfillment. There is a genuine earnestness moving through his practicality. This comes to fine expression when he declares that we are not investigating the nature of virtue in order that we may know what it is but in order that we may become good. He applies this position to education and asserts the importance of being trained from child-

hood to like and to dislike the proper things. This, he says emphatically, is what good education means.

Aristotle is dealing with matters which ought always to be kept in our minds when he declares roundly that a man is the origin of his actions. His definition becomes very sharp: the object of choice is something within our power which after deliberation we desire. His complete fashion of transcending small moral technicalities for large moral insights is illustrated by what he says about greatness of soul. The truly great-souled man must be a good man. But goodness itself receives a certain generous richness and distinction from greatness of soul.

Aristotle's study of the virtues combines large and many-sided qualities of experience with close and clear analysis. Here, as so often in reading him, you feel that somehow the centuries disappear and you are listening to the voice of a modern man. You come in contact with the very genius of the mind of Aristotle when he says:

We must therefore examine the conclusions we have advanced by bringing them to the test of the facts of life.

And he comes to a position which is also characteristically his own when he writes:

That which is best and most pleasant for each creature is that which is proper to the nature of each; accordingly the life of the intellect is the best and the pleasantest life for man, inasmuch as the intellect more than anything else is man; therefore this life will be the happiest.

And one sees how near to Aristotle's thought is something which transcends men's ordinary conception of him when we read:

Such a life as this, however, will be higher than the human level; not in virtue of his humanity will man achieve it, but in virtue of something in him that is divine; and by so much as this something

is superior to his composite nature, by so much is its activity superior to the exercise of the other forms of virtue. . . . Nor ought we to obey those who enjoin that a man should have man's thoughts and a mortal the thoughts of mortality, but we ought so far as possible to achieve immortality, and so all that a man may do to live in accordance with the highest thing in him; for though this be small in bulk, in power and value it far surpasses all the rest.

Here is indeed a humanism which, passing through human qualities, reaches for something beyond them. The sound of the Infinite is heard in the surging of the human sea.

IX

Men are so constituted that they find their life together. This is true of their life in households. It is also true of their life in states. Man is a political animal, though one must not overwork this biological reference, as in his actual consideration Aristotle soon rises from institutions which are necessary for the preservation of life to those which develop and maintain the good life. His political studies are a brilliant combination of what we would now call inductive with deductive reasoning. He keeps constantly in mind the ways of existing states. The collection of 158 Greek constitutions and the description of the political methods of peoples who were not Greeks gave an ample basis of actual experience.

To Aristotle the state was the city-state. Once and again attention has been called to the fact that though he lived in the very time when the empire, embracing many smaller political groups, was a very living actuality, his own thought never seems to have gone beyond the small state where all the citizens could take part in the government. He never perceived the possibilities or the significance of the principle of political representation. He studied in theory and in actuality that political form where one man has complete authority, that where a few control the state, and that where all the citizens are in control of the government. He analyzed the situation where the owners

of property possessed political power. He saw that any one of the possible methods of political organization and activity which he discussed could produce good results if it was used for the good of all, and any one of these forms could and did produce bad results when it was used to further the interests of the group and not those of the whole state. He deals apologetically and somewhat uneasily with slavery, which he regards as necessary for the ongoing of the state. He puts the greatest emphasis on education, for only men of good character can produce a good state.

Aristotle's work on politics is doubtless a work made of a collection of notebooks. This explains the odd breaks in the argument and the way in which the whole work comes to an end in the midst of a discussion, one may almost say in the middle of a sentence. Professor Ernest Barker in *The Politics of Aristotle*, translated with an Introduction, Notes, and Appendixes, has done not only a competent but a particularly brilliant and far-reaching piece of work. His detailed analysis is a consummate achievement. And his understanding of the manifold relationships of Aristotle's thoughts and arguments is particularly happy.

One is always impressed by the incidental flashes of the mind of Aristotle. A particularly pertinent example is the remark: "It is more necessary to equalize men's desires than their properties." He is not willing to allow the necessities of an argument to prevent his acknowledging the presence of a fact which does not fit in with the argument. Although he accepts the institution of slavery, he meticulously states: "There are some slaves who have the bodies of freemen—as there are others who have a freeman's soul."

He understands very thoroughly that the law which expresses the necessities of the general good must be above the individual will or caprice of the ruler or the ruling group. In a civilized state the person is under the law. This is the basis for his constant interest in constitutional government. And he

succeeded in putting this emphasis into the very heart of the political thought of the world. He understood that when democracy expressed the self-will or the caprice of the mob, it was no better—and might at specific points be worse—than the rule of the tyrant. A shrewd and wise tyrant may give a better order to the state than a foolish and uncritically emotional body of citizens unable to resist the temptation to misuse their power. The good life which the state is to further is not an abstract thing. It is a good life for actual people, and it finds its consummation in that rich life of the mind of individuals which is the glory of the state.

The desires of men are infinite. It is the business of the state to provide a proper discipline and curb for that which, if uncontrolled, would bring ruin to the collective life of men. There must be a training which makes the better sort of natures unwilling to indulge in covetousness. The poorer nature, Aristotle believes, should be put in an inferior position without being subject to injustice. This problem of the securing of justice, of the protection of men from injustice, is always explicit or implicit in the writings of Aristotle about politics. Perhaps he might have given a more important place in his thought to the fact that while democracy may subject masses of people to the temptation to misuse power, it also puts them in the very definite position of being able to resist injustice. His thought is particularly piercing when he says of the Spartans: "They did not know how to use the leisure which peace brought; they had never accustomed themselves to any discipline other and better than that of war." He realizes keenly that there is danger when the people are in power that politicians who desire to become effective leaders will do this by "seeking to flatter the people in the same way that men flatter a tyrant." Often Aristotle puts an insight into a brief and unforgettable sentence. "Demagogues arise in states where the laws are not sovereign." His discussion of theory in political matters is always given a salt of practicality by his shrewd knowledge of men.

"It is a better policy to award small honors over a period of time than to give great honors rapidly." Aristotle sees how dramatic success will turn men's heads. Sometimes this hard understanding comes to the edge of cynicism: "The weaker are always anxious for equality and justice. The strong pay no heed to either."

Aristotle all the while applied his doctrine of the middle way to his study of the political organization and practice of states. When he comes to speak of the ideal state, he sees it as one which secures the "enjoyment of partnership in a good life." "The highest pleasure derived from the noblest sources will be that of the man of greatest goodness." And this is what Aristotle sees as the goal of the ideal state. He wants always to get the best possible results in a given situation. He also wants men always to keep in mind possibilities beyond their present achievement. So the realist and the idealist meet in his political thought.

You see again the very genius of humanism in the writings of Aristotle about politics. He is dealing with the ways in which human beings may become able to live together successfully. He always assumes that man may study the ways of human living, can come to decisions about their excellence or lack of it, and can do something to produce a better situation. He completely transcends the realm of mechanical reactions on what we would call an impersonal level. He completely transcends the action of those vitalities which constitute the ongoing of the biological process. These must be included, but it is the life of rational understanding and of rational control which is really important. And all the political organization is justified by its producing the good life. And it must have as its ideal the best life. This is the life where the mind really comes to its own. And this life of the intelligence contemplating the very largest areas of truth belongs to a realm which at last goes beyond the human to that vast intelligence which is the ultimate reality of the universe.

Aristotle is all the while attempting to see life steadily and to see it whole. And so every end is linked up at last with the

greatest end of all. And every purpose is completed in that final purpose in which all existence finds its meaning. The state must at last be judged by that which is above it and not by that below it, which is controlled and included in its processes. And the reason which you see active in man is the clue to the significance of the vast investigation which Aristotle conducts and the very means by which it is carried on. It all reminds one of some words written by a poet who lived many centuries later than Aristotle in a land far from Greece: "Too much of legs and arms confuse the mind so. Match mind with mind."

X

With Aristotle's tremendous interest in argument and all the aspects of its logical structure it was inevitable that he would be deeply concerned with language and its use to win men's minds. It is from this standpoint that he writes his treatise on rhetoric. It omits much that a modern study would contain. But it contains much which is assumed or stated in every discussion of the processes of rhetoric. It became a classic and wielded the widest possible influence. You may say that dialectic is concerned with correct argument while rhetoric is concerned with persuasive argument. The formal syllogism of dialectic becomes the *enthymeme* in rhetoric. This rhetorical syllogism is likely to be incomplete in form, but it always has an implicit syllogism back of what may be rather a suggestive and incomplete statement.

Aristotle considers all the ways in which logic is made actually persuasive by effective speech. He passes from the logic of persuasion to what may be called the psychology of persuasion and considers the judge or those to whom the argument is addressed, the speaker and precisely the impression he endeavors to make, and the various ways in which an argument is made psychologically compelling. He considers the statement itself, the essential requirement of clarity, and the importance of appropriate speech. Argument is so to be organized as to state

the case and then compel the intellectual assent of the person or persons addressed. The use of words, the arrangement of ideas, and everything else about the argument must be arranged with this end in view. And Aristotle explains in much detail how this should be done. Here, as always, Aristotle likes careful definition: "Rhetoric then may be defined as the faculty of discovering the possible means of persuasion in reference to any subject whatever." "Let injustice then be defined as voluntarily causing injury contrary to the law."

In any practical writing of Aristotle a criticism of life is always emerging. This is particularly true of *Rhetoric*.

For a man would be entirely independent, provided he possessed all internal and external goods; for there are no others. Internal goods are those of mind and body; external goods are noble birth, friends, wealth, honor. . . . Let us then define happiness as well-being combined with virtue.

It is interesting to find a statement of the golden rule:

One who wishes for another what he wishes for himself seems to be the other's friend.

He quotes the precept of one of the seven wise men of Greece about those who love as if they would one day hate and hate as if they would one day love, which in his own form is used centuries later by Francis Bacon. He can put a bite into a phrase, as when he says that "wit is cultured insolence." He describes a kind of dignity of which he says: "This dignity is mild and decent pomposity." It is clear enough that when a man is reading one of the practical treatises of Aristotle, he is not only being trained in respect of the subject discussed but is all the while being guided to think such thoughts and use such ways of speech as characterize an urbane and cultivated gentleman, with a salt of wit added.

It is easy to see the relation of all this to the humanism of Aristotle. The interest in human speech and its clear and adequate and persuasive use belongs to the humanistic tradition. Intelligent speech is one of the defining characteristics of man. And its study is a part of the investigation of the human cause. Aristotle knows all about verbal and logical tricks, and writes about them skillfully. He knows all the psychological tricks, too, and he discusses them with complete understanding. Human speech can be used wisely or foolishly. It can be used honestly or dishonestly. And this apprehension, too, is to become a part of the humanistic tradition.

The whole work of Aristotle represents a great enterprise in the direction of investigating man's resources, the fashion in which they can be used, and the knowledge and the power which come from their complete command. Others had written about the arts and the powers of speech before him. He refers once and again to Isocrates, the most brilliant and powerful of them all, who, though not his friend, was well worth quoting. And here again is an example of the fairness of Aristotle's mind. As usual, he gathers up the best of past thought and, after passing it through his own mind, sends it forth with the imprint of his own clear intelligence upon it.

The writing of Aristotle is an illustration of the truth of the statement that often you can exercise more originality by the able use of existing materials than by ignoring them and doing your own work without them. And men using many languages of which Aristotle never could have heard learned to make their speech and writing clear and persuasive and logically effective by reading what he wrote of the art of rhetoric.

XI

In the *Poetics* of Aristotle we come to one of those great and seminal pieces of writing which have entered into subsequent thought and criticism in the most various ways. There

has been too much of a tendency on the part of interpreters to read their own views into Aristotle. Dr. S. H. Butcher, to whose writings about the Greek genius we owe so much, cannot quite resist the temptation to read into the *Poetics* the hedonism of Professor Saintsbury. And even Professor J. W. H. Atkins, whose study of the *Poetics* is in many ways so complete and satisfactory and who admits that in the *Poetics* "this hedonistic theory is nowhere explicitly stated," is not quite able to resist the same temptation. There is a tendency, too, to see the *Poetics* as a sort of self-conscious biology turning to literary criticism, and so interpreting Aristotle's *katharsis* as something which can be understood in the terms of physiology. Professor Atkins is on surer ground when he declares that Aristotle's "conception of poetry as a revelation of the permanent and universal characteristics of human life and thought . . . is perhaps his most valuable contribution to literary theory." It is in this spirit that Professor Irving Babbitt says:

Aristotle's *katharsis*, the most discussed term in criticism, can be interpreted rightly only in the light of his doctrine of the universal. A great tragedy portrays passion and portrays it vividly, at the same time it generalizes it. The spectator who is thus lifted into the atmosphere of the universal tends to be purged of everything that is petty and purely personal in his own emotions.

Here we leave the realm of biology and enter into a profound analysis of human experience. Aristotle was a rather remarkable biologist. He was also a first-class literary critic.

The *Poetics* is fragmentary and incomplete, probably a series of notes for lectures, but it is full of the meat of understanding. There is a discussion of imitation, and there are suggestive thoughts about comedy. But Aristotle comes into his own in the famous definition of tragedy:

Tragedy then is an imitation of an action that is serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude; in language embellished with each kind of artistic ornament, the several kinds being found in separate

parts of the play; in the form of action not narrative; through pity and fear effecting the proper purgation of these emotions.

Aristotle clearly prefers the tragic to the epic form of poetry, and indeed regards it as the highest form of poetic expression. He declares that unity of action is necessary in a tragedy, and he makes remarks which are at least capable of being interpreted as requiring unity of time and place. He discusses many details in respect of dramatic construction; and here, as always, he makes constant reference to the work which already had been done. In a sense he makes a study of the great Greek tragedians a school of tragedy. This is not quite the whole truth, however, for he states principles with such insight and clarity as to make them applicable to a field larger than that already covered. In seeing the universal expressed in the concrete he finds a place for permanence, for the universal principles do not change; and he finds also a place for originality, for the concrete forms in which the universal appears are ever changing. And even when old tales are told over again, there is always the possibility of original angles of vision which see the old story in new aspects, and so see new aspects of the expression of the universal in the particular.

The conception of *katharsis* when truly understood has a moral loftiness of the very greatest significance. When I see my own tragedy only in individual and personal terms, it is a hard and disintegrating experience; but when my mind is lifted to the universal aspects of tragedy by witnessing a great interpretation of a supremely tragic situation, everything is changed and the bearing of pain as a part of the human lot comes to have a certain lofty and fruitful quality. Aristotle would have despised self-conscious virtue, but he always understood the relation of great writing to the good life.

There is no end of wise observations and telling comments in Aristotle's *Poetics*, but he comes to the heart of the matter when he says: "Poetry therefore is a more philosophical and

higher thing than history for poetry tends to express the universal, history the particular." It would make a great difference in much writing if these words of Aristotle were heeded: "A thing whose presence or absence makes no difference, is not an organic part of the whole." There is pith and insight in the requirement "to produce a tragic effect that satisfies the moral sense." There is wit as well as insight in the remark: "The poet should prefer probable impossibilities to improbable possibilities." He speaks of "critics" who "jump at certain groundless conclusions; they pass adverse judgment and then proceed to reason on it; and assuming that the poet has said whatever they happen to think, find fault if a thing is inconsistent with their own fancy." This criticism of critics opens wide vistas.

For a period of many years the text of the *Poetics* disappeared. But once read, it has its own secrets of life. We are not surprised when Professor Atkins says: "When all is said, the *Poetics* is perhaps the most living of all the Aristotelian works." Here at least a profound and penetrating mind surveys poetry in such a fashion as to set it on a hill where its light cannot be hid.

And here, as always, Aristotle sees the human mind conscious of its great powers surveying its work with a quest for effective skills and a sense of permanent meanings. A true humanism finds the *Poetics* of Aristotle to be one of its most characteristic and distinguished documents.

XII

In the case of a great man it is often true that a part of his biography includes the time after his death. So it was with Aristotle. He came into his own in the Middle Ages. There was the vast Arabian influence suggested by the names of Avicenna and Averroës. There was the Christian influence at first related to the only then-known writings on logic. But with the coming of a knowledge of the whole range of his writings and the arrival of Thomas Aquinas, Aristotle was made the

intellectual frame for a vast Christian synthesis. Ernest Barker has put it handsomely:

In the writings of St. Thomas, Aristotle the encyclopaedist 1,600 years after his death was wrought upon by another great and massive encyclopaedist who sought to inform the sum of ancient knowledge with the spirit of Christian faith; and the pagan scholar who had built his own great monument, was incorporated by a Christian thinker into another of the great and enduring monuments of human knowledge.

The time came when men looked to Aristotle not only for principles and knowledge, but also for all the facts which were believed to be significant. They could scarcely believe a thing unless it was stated in the writings of Aristotle. So when the great age of awakening came, it was necessary to break a mold of the mind of Aristotle which he himself would never have approved. And in the long last there was discovered in Aristotle that which a man who inherited the full wealth of the modern scientific age could well treat with respect. So in one way or another he has remained a living figure in the thought of men.

In truth, the achievement of Aristotle is fairly amazing both in range and in substance. He plotted the paths of logical thought. He classified studies which would investigate the physical world and achieved distinction for himself in almost every one of them. He studied the nature of the ultimate reality in whose existence all things find their place and meaning. He studied the moral relationships which give significance to the individual life and hold social life together. He studied the organization of states and the principles by which they live and move. He studied the ways of speech by whose means men influence the thought and the decision of other men. He studied poetry, which he believed to be the most distinguished expression of the richness of man's experience, and its relation with universal meaning, especially as it came to fullness of power

in Greek tragedy. He did all this with a sense of intellectual structure and a sense of purpose, moving through the whole vast range of fact and life, of existence and activity. He believed in the human mind. He used the human mind. He believed in a subtle relation between the worlds of thought and being and action. He believed that the mind was made to understand the world and the world was made to be understood by the mind. And it was man's mind and the world in which man lived concerning which he had these beliefs. So he built up a great interpretation of thought and action and existence as seen by the acute and observing and analyzing mind of a man with the fullest intelligence and the happiest confidence in the results of his own efforts. So he became the most comprehensive and distinctive humanist in the ancient world. The name had not yet been invented. But the work of Aristotle set going processes which made the name inevitable.

It was in a sense an open universe in which Aristotle lived. It looked toward more than he saw. It looked toward more than he said. All through his writings you find observations and suggestions and hints whose full meaning will be understood only when the study of human experience and of man's world has been seen to offer clues to a world where human intelligence is seen to be rooted in divine intelligence, and human purpose is seen to find its source and quality in divine purpose, and the living man to find his meaning in the living God. And all this when it comes will not be seen as the contradiction of Aristotle's thought. It will be seen as its fulfillment.

More and more, as we study the writings of Aristotle, we come to realize that he brought together things which are often, perhaps almost always, found separate: the observing mind of the scientist, the quest for causes of the philosopher, the acute analysis of the logician, the serious earnestness of the moralist, the interest in the rich and varied experiences of men which characterizes the student of the humanities, a certain sense of spiritual meaning which emerges again and again. Men who have

been drawn to one aspect of Aristotle's life and work have all too often written of him as if all that he thought and did could be brought under that one category. In this fashion he has quite often proved too much for his interpreters. It is when we allow all his words to be heard and all of his ideas to be seen in their actual quality that we realize the true genius of his greatness and the fashion in which he made the human mind an instrument of analysis and interpretation corresponding to its place in the actual and living experience of men.

Cicero

THE VOICES of the past were always sounding in Lord Byron's ear. Writing of Rome in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* he cried:

Alas, for Tully's voice, and Virgil's lay
And Livy's pictured page!—but these shall be
Her resurrection; all beside—decay.

To one who knows the whole story of Cicero's life and leadership and writing, the sigh for Tully's voice may seem rather casual. But at least it places the "Father of Humane Letters" where he belongs—at the very heart of the grandeur that was Rome. Greece had had its flowering period of culture and thought and artistic expression. It had had its period of brilliant decadence and of decadence which was not particularly brilliant. The power of Rome had grown in the most astonishing fashion. The city on the Tiber had come to embrace all Italy, including that Magna Graecia in which the light of Attica had so brightly shone. Then it had moved out about the Great Sea, conquering land after land. To the north its conquests had spread as the practical power of its lordship incessantly increased.

All this involved dramatic struggle and many a breath-taking tale of heroism and of military organization and achievement. If Greece was strong in intelligence and not always so strong in character, Rome was strong in character and not always so strong in intelligence. The bright Greek intellect was likely to break apart into endless coruscating fragments. Rome had the

solid strength which made for effective government and a certain capacity for integration which inevitably moved in the direction of one world dominated by the central power in Italy. But Rome knew how to assimilate culture as well as how to adjust itself to the endless variety of human and national types. So the mind of Rome was gradually, and then with increasing acceleration, becoming Greek. Athens subjected to Rome became the schoolmaster of its masters. The Roman in a way despised the versatile and volatile Greek. But he had an uneasy sense of inferiority in contact with the quick-moving mind of Athens. And he began to suspect that Greece must give him the mind without which he could not achieve an intellectual position which would in any way correspond to his political supremacy.

Quite apart from formal thought, something was happening to the minds of men. They were beginning to think of a possible life enriched by every aspect of human experience, of a synthesis of the mind corresponding to the synthesis in organization. The Roman, always a shrewd politician and often an able statesman, was not long in perceiving the advantage of a great frame of thought about life which would be accepted and understood wherever Rome ruled. If men think the same thoughts, it is easier to control their actions. But it was much more than a matter of sagacious political insight. The Roman, who began by being a powerful provincial, moved into realms of intelligence where he saw the sublimity of conceptions which would be able to master the mind of mankind. Of course, in a very rich and productive sense this was humanism without the name. And the man who was the very incarnation of the passion for a Latin mind which would make its own the whole deep quality of human experience was Marcus Tullius Cicero.

I

As the second century before Christ was approaching an end (106 B.C.), Cicero was born in Arpinum in the Volscian hill

country. Pompey was born in the same year. And six years later Julius Caesar came into the world. All three were to be men of destiny. Marius was born in the same town, and before Cicero had begun to take an interest in passing events he had achieved the world-resounding victories which had saved the very life of Rome. The family of Cicero belonged to the equestrian order which stood between the nobility and the mass of the people. His mother is said to have been of noble birth. His father was an outstanding and prosperous man in the town of Arpinum. He was a man of genuine intellectual interests, and he had influential connections in the city of Rome. The name Cicero had no aristocratic connotations, and before Cicero as a new man broke into the nobility he is said to have been advised to change it. The story is that he proudly refused, declaring that he would make it more glorious than names hedged about with noble memories. The old grandfather of Cicero hated Greek and the Greeks, and would have been much shocked could he have known that his grandson would join the Greek and the Roman minds in a kind of noble cultural wedlock.

Plutarch picked up tales of the precocious youthful intelligence of Cicero. However this may be, the father of the lad thought it worth while to make every effort to give an ample education to Marcus and his younger brother Quintus. He took a house in Rome and spent a part of each year there. Marcus had the benefit of the best teachers the capital afforded. There were three Greek teachers: Archias the poet, Philo the philosopher, and Molon of Rhodes, the teacher of rhetoric and figure in the courts. Cicero became proficient in Greek, and before long he was speaking in Greek as well as Latin. He listened for untold hours to the masters of Roman oratory, his eager mind drinking in their thoughts, their words, and their manner of speech.

For two years young Marcus lived with the distinguished and venerable Quintus Mucius Scaevola, the pontifex maximus, studying law and becoming accustomed to the ways of thought and

conversation of a most highly integrated mind. He was introduced to the Epicurean and Stoic and Academic forms of philosophy. He always hated Epicureanism, but probably very early his mind began to take on its form of receptiveness to elements in various philosophic schools. There were fierce days of terror while Cicero was a young man, and through them he passed in safety. He had his own experience as a soldier, and during his days of study in Rome he had formed the friendship with Atticus which was one of the most satisfying experiences of his life. He became a fascinated student of history and literature, and filled his mind with significant facts, varied human experiences, and noble and distinguished writing. During all of his life a phrase from a masterpiece always fell lightly and easily from his lips. He was sensitive and highly imaginative, and the vivid and vital life of Rome stood out in sharp and dramatic contrast to his country life as a boy in a town in the hills. He applied himself to his studies to the extent that he risked his health.

Though it was his supreme ambition to take part in public life, he was twenty-six before he appeared in a case at law. That was about ten years after he had assumed the white toga of manhood. The prescriptions of Sulla and his dictatorship had put a vast fear in men's minds. It is all the more remarkable that we find Cicero appearing for a client who had been accused by Chrysogonus, a favorite of Sulla, of murdering his father. The speech of Cicero is one which must have required great courage. He is deft and skillful in his references to Sulla, but he castigates his favorite unmercifully; and what he thinks of a regime where force counts for more than justice is made clear enough. He won his case, and we may be sure that from this time he was a marked man. He had spoken what was in men's hearts everywhere but what they were afraid to speak. Later Cicero accepted the case of a lady whose town had been disfranchised by Sulla. And this involved a criticism of the acts of the dictator. Altogether it is probable that it became wise

for Cicero to leave Rome for a while. The reason given is the state of his health. The picture we have of him at the time reveals a very thin young man with a very long neck and a voice the worse for all his shouting. His medical advisers feared that he might be on the road to a very bad condition of health, so he left Rome for a couple of years. He went to Athens first, where he remained as a student for six months. His quick and responsive mind thrilled in the presence of all the memories of the great city of the mind. His Greek studies were deepened and enriched and made definitive by a stay which, for a young man as well prepared for the experience as was he, must not be considered as so short as it might seem. Then he went to Rhodes, where his old teacher Molon treated his style with a good deal of severity and taught him to find a *via media* between the luscious Asiatic and the bare Attic forms of speech. Cicero visited famous towns in Asia and mingled happily with famous people. He completely regained his health and learned to use his voice in speaking with a happy control and with varied appeal.

Sulla was dead when he returned, and Rome, without being aware that it was so, was ready to be the stage for his brilliant activities. He had learned to combine philosophy with rhetoric and to use form for the expression of substance. He had learned to hate the overthrow of freedom by terror. And he was moving into a clearer apprehension of that philosophy of the combination of conservative interests in a free state which was to characterize his career.

At first some people were inclined to think of Cicero as a dilettante with a kind of precious interest in Greek. But the very character of his intelligence, the range of his human relationships, and the compulsion of his speeches soon changed all that. If he was ever to become consul, he must begin the long preliminary journey. And, as a matter of fact, he occupied each of the offices which came before the supreme position at the earliest possible age. He became quaestor at about the age of thirty. He was assigned to special responsibility in the province

of Sicily. Here he conducted himself with such a combination of justice, consideration, and administrative sagacity that the people of Sicily became his permanent supporters and he was able to be of use to them later in a time of great need. He came back to Rome with a happy sense of achievement and expected everybody to be talking about his accomplishments. When he learned, as he tells us with an attractive chuckle, that the people of Rome did not even know where he had been, he realized that it was necessary to keep in sight of the Roman public in order to impress them. He now had secured life membership, however, in the Roman senate. He was busy with brilliant work in the courts. Then came the case of Verres, in which Cicero won pre-eminent distinction. The government of Sicily by Verres had been a triumph of injustice and bad administration. The loot which he carried away he won by bleeding the province. When Verres was accused and came to trial, the people of Sicily naturally turned to the one man whose character and justice they trusted most. It was a difficult task, for powerful interests had determined to secure the acquittal of Verres. Cicero was given something over a hundred days to collect the evidence. In less than half that time he returned with material so conclusively damaging that it must have given him complete satisfaction. He conducted the case with the greatest skill and with triumphant success.

When in 70 B.C. he sought election to the office of aedile, he received more votes than any of his three rivals. This brought up the difficult problem of the aedile's relation to public shows and festivals. Cicero managed to meet the demands of the occasion without wrecking his finances and without being dishonest. In due season Cicero was elected praetor. He was now a presiding magistrate, though he continued to have the right to plead before a court. He took the side of Pompey in respect of giving that powerful leader added military authority. Pompey went off to the East to do a difficult piece of work with commanding success. And when on his return to Rome he dis-

banded his troops, he seemed to justify the confidence of Cicero.

In the year 64 B.C. Cicero was elected consul, and the next year, with a colleague whom he persuaded to follow his lead, he entered upon his high duties. The outstanding events of his consulate were connected with his crushing of the conspiracy of Catiline. The plot had various stages, and included a plan to murder Cicero, to put to death the leading men of the city who stood for law and order, and to inaugurate a kind of debtless Utopia—which indeed would not have been a Utopia for very long. Cicero learned of the plot and acted with consummate courage. He attacked Catiline in the very presence of the lawless culprit in the senate. Again and again he used all the resources of his oratory to build up the loyalty and the courage of the leaders and the people. He gathered evidence and confronted white-faced conspirators with indubitable proof of their criminal plotting. Catiline had fled. The senate insisted that the senatorial members of the conspiracy should be executed, and under Cicero's direction this was promptly done. Catiline joined the men he had gathered to support him and attempted civil war. He was at the head of ten thousand men. They were completely defeated, and Catiline himself was slain. Some sentimental recorders of events have tried to picture him as the champion of the hard-pressed poor. But as F. R. Cowell says stoutly in his important book *Cicero and the Roman Republic*: "Such an interpretation will not stand examination. A man as reckless of national welfare as Catiline shows himself to have been, cared little for the poor. He was out for himself like any Fascist or Nazi gangster. The poor were merely pawns in the all-engrossing game of personal political ambitions." Shaken into consciousness of that from which it had been saved, Rome poured lavish appreciation upon Cicero, and the cold and reserved Cato called him the father of his country. Masses of the people began to feel for him a deep trust and loyalty which on the part of a surprising number persisted through the years:

It was now seventeen years since Cicero had appeared in his first important case in Rome. He had become its most brilliant and powerful speaker. He had become a trusted leader. A sheer outsider, he had made his way into the ranks of the most exclusive class, and he had held the highest position in the state. From his early days of intense study he had continued the pursuits of learning; and while Varro was the most erudite of his contemporaries, probably no one surpassed and perhaps no one equaled him in general command of the facts, the movements, and the policies involved in history or in the manifold richness of literature. Over these things he thought and brooded until they became a very part of his intellectual and moral structure. He had learned to live with men in the easy and happy freedom of the cultivated intelligence. He had become the outstanding example and exponent of the civilized mind. He had become a man of supreme patriotism. He wanted Rome to be safe from the moral disintegration which comes when freedom is lost, and the social disintegration which comes when the sanctions which maintain a stable society are set aside. He was at the top of his city and his country. And this meant that he was at the top of the world.

But this world was becoming a very complicated place. Pompey, heavy and conventional, but honest, regarded himself as the chief of the Romans and was inclined to be jealous of the eminence of Cicero. The supreme genius of the age, Julius Caesar, was becoming more than visible to the naked eye. Would he and Pompey inevitably clash in the struggle for leadership? Would the Republic itself be safe as his imperial ambition grew? The decadent young nobility represented a problem of intense danger and difficulty. Clodius, the most debauched and debased of them all, became the center of a scandal which shook Rome. When he was accused and tried, he escaped conviction only by the grossest use of bribery. Cicero with characteristic honesty gave evidence which in a fair trial would have led to his conviction. Clodius never forgave him.

And the episode was destined to have vast repercussions in Cicero's own life.

Caesar was becoming more and more important. Cicero found it necessary to decide where he would place his influence in order to secure the maintenance of the Republic. He felt that both he and the political standards which were dearer to him than life were more secure with Pompey. So, though he liked Caesar personally, he risked his displeasure and attempted to widen the gap between him and Pompey. In this he failed. But so powerful a figure had he become that when Caesar and Pompey and Crassus combined forces he was asked to join them. Stout enough as always when his central principles were at stake, he refused; and so without him the combination became what was called the First Triumvirate. Caesar was always willing to use the very human refuse when this seemed necessary to further his political purposes, and he now made Clodius a principal instrument of his political plans. Cicero overestimated his strength and did not realize that he was coming to be in the gravest political danger. His public utterances offended Caesar, and Clodius was given the right of way. When he secured an enactment that anyone who had put Roman citizens to death without a trial should be forbidden fire and water, Cicero knew at once that this was directed against his putting into action the decision of the senate against the senatorial members of the conspiracy of Catiline. He put on mourning, and the senate, which sympathized with him, did the same. The consuls, hostile to Cicero, compelled the senators and the equites who had gone into mourning to dress as usual. Pompey, who had definitely promised to save Cicero from harm, coldly refused to help him. So in March of 58 B.C. Cicero left Rome and went into exile. He was outlawed by the act of Clodius, and his villas at Tusculum and Formiae were looted and subjected to destruction.

In Thessalonica, Cicero took refuge at the house of his friend Plancius, quaestor in Macedonia. It was a heartbreaking expe-

rience. From the highest position Cicero had sunk to the depths. He remained seven months at Thessalonica. But at Rome things were going badly. Clodius got completely out of hand. Soon Pompey was working for the recall of Cicero. The next year, under the leadership of Lentulus the consul, he was recalled. He was met everywhere in Italy with enthusiasm, his journey to Rome taking the form of a triumphal progress. On September 4 he entered his own city once more amidst universal rejoicing. But his hope for republican order through the harmony of the senatorial and equestrian groups fell to the ground. The triumvirate had become all-powerful. Cicero, who had a sense of facts, saw that he must accept the situation, and made a brilliant speech in honor of Caesar's military achievements.

It can scarcely be said that Cicero had returned to his old freedom of action. He found it necessary to co-operate with those who controlled the state. Sometimes his mind was made up for him as to whom he should defend. When he could get away from the rush of political life, he was busy with important literary work. He was now on intimate terms with Pompey and had very friendly relations with Caesar. His brother Quintus went to be the legate of Caesar and made a good record in Britain and Gaul. If he did not have quite his old position, he did have a very distinguished and important place. And one never knew what turn of events might give him an opportunity to do something for his own conception of a Republic free from dictation.

In 52 B.C. Clodius was killed, and threat from the activities of that violent wretch came to an end. It became necessary, very much against the wishes of Cicero, that he should undertake the government of the province of Cilicia. He gave one year to this activity, and discharged his responsibilities with distinction and skill and complete honesty. The people of the province, accustomed to rapacity in a proconsul, could scarcely credit their senses as they experienced the courtly friendliness and unselfish honesty of Cicero. They became his devoted friends. He took

his brother Quintus along as military staff officer. There was some highly creditable military action against hostile and dangerous mountain tribes. After this success Cicero was hailed imperator and aspired to a triumph which, in the wild and troubled days which followed, was never granted. He returned to Rome to find the terrible struggle between Caesar and Pompey, from which the Republic never recovered, about to break out.

Cicero found himself in a difficult situation. With Caesar triumphant, it seemed clear that the Republic was at an end. With Pompey victorious, there seemed at the time to be some hope for a free Rome. Or perhaps Cicero could reconcile the two and so do something for the maintaining of the Republic. When Caesar crossed the Rubicon, the die was indeed cast. And after cruel hesitations Cicero decided to join Pompey, who had escaped to Dyrrachium and was there with his army. Cicero spent six months in Pompey's camp. He was disillusioned with practically everything. It became clear that the victory of Pompey would lead to a reign of terror. Cicero did not think much of the army or of the leadership of Pompey. There were two absolute wills at war. There was little hope for the Republic in the victory of either. And when Pompey was completely defeated at Pharsalia, Cicero refused to become commander of the forces remaining and was ready to make peace with Caesar. When Pompey was murdered in Egypt, Cicero, although all his illusions about Pompey had been dissipated, gave a characteristic judgment: "I cannot help deploring his fate; for I have found him an upright, moral, and righteous man."

Caesar in power indulged in no reign of terror. He was surprisingly lenient. He knew that some of the ablest and best men in the country had taken the side of Pompey. He knew that too many of his own supporters were worthless. He was anxious to win the best men to his cause. And he made the way of return easy. Cato, stern and unbending, preferred death to continued life after the end of the Republic and committed suicide.

Cicero watched the wise and gracious conduct of Caesar with something like amazement and began to hope that so generous and able a man might be won to the cause of the Republic. He himself was treated with the greatest tact and kindness. Indeed, Caesar had always liked Cicero, who was almost the only one of his own contemporaries who could meet him on anything like his own intellectual level. He had used every friendly means to win Cicero from the support of Pompey, and now he received him with amazing graciousness. Indeed, Caesar was willing to do anything for Cicero short of giving up his own ambition. A speech of Cicero could move him to a verdict he had not expected to reach. He found his conversation fascinating, and arranged for a collection of his witty sayings. We must never forget that Cicero was the wittiest man of his time. And we must not forget that Caesar was a man of quite first-class intellectual parts as well as a great soldier and a consummate politician. Not only did he appreciate the movement of the quick mind of Cicero; he recognized that in matters of central conviction he could not move him. And he wanted, as far as he could, to have men of intellectual integrity about him.

So a period of great prosperity had come to Cicero if he would have it so. Sometimes Caesar was so generous and wise that it seemed quite impossible that he could not be won to the cause of the Republic. Then Cicero became full of hope. But when he saw that Caesar was determined to overthrow the Republic and become the absolute head of the state, Cicero had not a moment's hesitation in remaining loyal to his own convictions. He had nothing to do with the plot for the assassination of Caesar, but when it was over he openly rejoiced that one whom he regarded as a tyrant had been struck down.

The tyrant was dead, but the Republic was not restored. There seems to have been a naïve conviction on the part of the men who killed Caesar that once the great man was dead, all would be well with the Republic. They soon discovered their mistake as the strange, turbid stream of events took its troubled

and tragic course. It became clear that Antony, brilliant and daring and ruthless, was in his own way a greater menace than Caesar had been. In Caesar autocracy was wise and in many ways just, and far-sighted to an astonishing degree. In Anthony autocracy would be completely without scruple, completely cruel and selfish.

Cicero now became the outstanding man in the state. In a way it was his greatest hour. In a series of overwhelming powerful addresses—called Philippics after the great speeches of Demosthenes—he attacked Antony. He kept in touch with all men having any sort of power whose good will could aid the Republic. He was the most powerful man in Rome. The senate at last recognized both his character and his ability, and followed him willingly. When the young Octavius, who was to inherit the name and power of Caesar, came to Rome—a lad of nineteen with a very old head on his shoulders—he saw that he must train with Cicero if he was to have any power at all. He professed the greatest admiration for the old statesman, called him his father, and seemed quite willing to be guided by him. But the young man realized that the murderers of Caesar were the heroes of Cicero. So, though he made the most of the companionship of the older man and imbibed much of his political wisdom, which he doubtless used later, and seemed to follow him gladly, he was really using him for his own purposes.

Cicero had made a political structure which seemed complete and almost adequate. One marvels at the range of his activity and the skill of his leadership in these difficult days. But when young Octavius betrayed him and joined forces with Antony, everything fell apart. Cicero had done his best, but he now knew that all was lost. He soon learned that his name was first on the proscription which Antony, bursting with hate, had persuaded or forced Octavius to accept. Cicero made only half-hearted attempts to escape. His real work was over, and he had no compelling desire to live. When the men sent to murder him found his litter on a path near the seashore not far from one

of his villas, Cicero refused to allow his loyal slaves to fight for him, and with quiet dignity and complete courage he met his death.

It was years later, as Plutarch tells us, that Augustus Caesar

paid a visit to one of his daughter's sons; and the boy, since he had in his hands a book of Cicero's, was terrified and sought to hide it in his gown: but Caesar saw, and took the book, and read a great part of it as he stood, and then gave it back to the youth, saying: "A learned man, my child, a learned man and a lover of his country."

II

We know a good deal of Cicero's domestic life. He was devoted to his brother Quintus and to the young Quintus, his son. His brother Quintus was a distinguished military officer, and with Cicero in Cilicia and with Caesar in Gaul made a fine record. He was a hot-headed person and did not get along well with his wife, the sister of Cicero's great friend Atticus, herself evidently a rather formidable person. In the main, Quintus was devoted to Cicero. But after the debacle of Pompey both Quintus and his son hurried off to make peace with Caesar and did not hesitate to do everything they could to besmirch the name of Cicero with Caesar. The great man, however, understood the character of Cicero and the temperament of Quintus. He really received the father and son into his good graces for the sake of Cicero. And at this very time Cicero was trying to make their own situation easier by writing to Caesar and taking all the blame for their temporary allegiance to Pompey. The contrast in behavior is striking enough. Cicero was forgiving, and welcomed the brother and nephew back into his good graces. In the last bitter days Cicero and Quintus left Rome together, weeping repeatedly in their consciousness that all was lost. It was decided that Quintus should go back to Rome to look after some financial matters while Cicero continued the journey toward what it was hoped would be safety.

Quintus, who commanded no such loyalty from his slaves as did Cicero, seems to have been betrayed. He did succeed in hiding, but when his son was suffering torture because of his refusal to reveal the place where his father was hiding, Quintus came forth and the two died together. They were on no such level either of intelligence or of character as Cicero. But they were able men moving with some confusion through a difficult age. And Cicero gave them a warm affection and was devoted to their welfare.

At the age of about thirty Cicero married. His wife was Terentia, and she belonged to an important and wealthy family. From the social standpoint it was a brilliant marriage for a young man of the equestrian order who had come from a country town to make his way. For thirty years they lived together, and we have many letters written from Cicero to his wife which are full of characteristic expressions of affection. She was evidently a masterful—perhaps all too masterful—woman, and at last their life together came to an end. Cicero was a great gentleman, and his references to the break, even in letters to his great friend Atticus, are so full of reserve and restraint that we know little about the whole situation. There seem to have been financial matters which involved something like the honesty of Terentia. For all his quiet and dignified treatment of the matter, we can be sure that there was something deeply tragic about the whole situation. He knew when to be silent. Afterward he married a wealthy ward many years younger than himself. She seems to have resented his devotion to his greatly loved daughter Tullia, and on her death behaved with such brutal lack of feeling that Cicero divorced her. If he had made any financial gain from the marriage, he was willing to lose, and indeed did lose, it all. Though the young wife and her family sought for a reconciliation, Cicero was implacable. When once deeply stirred, he never allowed wealth or social position to stand in the way of a decision.

Cicero's daughter Tullia drew forth more affection than he

gave to anyone else. At thirteen she married Piso, who seems to have commanded Cicero's respect and affection. Her second marriage, to Crassipes, was not successful and resulted in a divorce. Her third husband, Dolabella, was of the highest social position—a man of fashion and a person of bright and vivid wit. He was a wild young man-about-town of completely lawless morals. The marriage was consummated during Cicero's absence from Rome, and Dolabella was so openly unfaithful that a divorce was inevitable. The young scapegrace was prominent in the political life of Rome, and after Caesar's death managed to become consul. When Antony offered him responsibilities in the East, he accepted and revealed his full character in plunder, extortion, and murder. He was declared a public enemy, and on the defeat of his forces he ordered one of his soldiers to kill him. He was evidently a person of a good deal of fascination and showed his best side to Cicero. Tullia found it hard to break with him, and the strain of the whole experience probably had much to do with her death immediately after the birth of a child. Cicero was inconsolable. He wandered about in the wilder part of one of his estates and filled his hours with mourning. When he came back to normal living, he was full of plans for building a shrine for this beloved daughter.

Cicero's son Marcus was, of course, a great object of his father's affection. He confessed that his son needed a spur. But he did everything he could for him, sometimes teaching him personally, and providing almost lavishly for his student day in Athens. He wrote a fascinating book of morals for his son's perusal. The boy was not without ability, and his participation in military activity with Brutus in Macedonia enabled his father to announce in a speech that the legion which was commanded by Lucius Piso had placed itself at the disposal of his son Cicero. The young man was out of Italy at the time of the death of his father, his uncle, and his cousin. But after Augustus had broken with Antony and had defeated him, he made young Cicero consul with him; and Plutarch tells us that

it was under the consulship of the son of the murdered Cicero that the senate took down the statues of Antony and made void the other honors which had been paid to him. "Thus," says Plutarch in a characteristic sentence, "the heavenly powers devolved upon the family of Cicero the final steps in the punishment of Antony."

Cicero was not a man of great wealth. But he had a splendid house in Rome and other villas besides the famous one at Tusculum. At one of his villas he once entertained Caesar with a couple of thousand soldiers. He loved to surround himself with books and statuary. And he knew how to make life gracious and graceful. Doubtless that astute man Atticus kept his eye on his finances. In any event, Cicero was able to meet level-eyed the wealthy people among whom he lived. He was fond of nature, and his times of retirement with his books and his literary work and his happy enjoyment of lovely surroundings were doubtless some of the most satisfactory portions of his too often deeply troubled life. But in spite of strains and tensions, his life was in many ways an essentially happy one. He enjoyed the play of his own mind. He enjoyed thinking and he enjoyed writing. The give-and-take of human companionship filled him with zest. And his public activities were an engrossing passion.

III

It has been said that Erasmus is the only writer of letters of whom we have record whose letters can rival Cicero in numbers. The Dutch humanist modestly confessed that he was not comparable to Cicero. In any event, the letters of Cicero have a unique place in history and in literature. Through them we have such an intimate knowledge of the Rome of his time as we could obtain in no other way. And such masses of them survive. Tiro, his slave and later a freedman, his confidential secretary and friend and the veritable companion of his intellectual life, collected and issued after the death of Cicero many volumes of his letters to his friends. There are also a good many

letters of the friends to Cicero. There are letters to Pompey, to Caesar, to Brutus, to Cato, and indeed to nearly everyone of importance in Rome over a long period. There are letters to his wife Terentia, for years very affectionate and at last becoming very cool. There are letters to his brother Quintus, very full and surprisingly formal compared to the letters to Atticus of which I will speak later. There are letters to Tiro, which his secretary, who always has a fine sense of propriety, puts last.

Cicero himself declared that he had both an intimate and a more formal style of writing. He always had at his command the exquisite urbanity of a finished Roman gentleman. And he could be intimate with a merry charm and a fascinating wit. Literary interests, intellectual enthusiasms, questions of scholarship, and, above all, every sort of question having to do with matters of political significance come up for discussion. Many letters full of gracious allusions and adroitly turned phrases ask for favors for friends from other friends. Cicero did this sort of thing with consummate skill. No man could surpass him in turning a compliment.

In the last period, when he is trying to make Rome secure against Antony, nothing seems to escape his mind. We see him in the very process of creating a fusion of intellect and purpose and will. It is not too much to say that even in the most formal writing we sense the man behind the letter. As a practical statesman, not to say a practical politician, he has to take things as they are and make the best he can of men and of situations. But there is a great strength and firmness back of even the most facile and pliable phrases. The welfare of the Republic is the great matter with him, and through every coiling and twisting turn of circumstances he is loyal to the great purpose. He can express the warmest appreciation. He can use the most subtle satire. You feel all the while the range of his mind, the fullness of his knowledge, and his shrewd sagacity. Upon the sensitive surface of his mind people and events made a sharp and clear record. The past of Rome lived in his imagination. He made

himself felt as a cosmopolitan gentleman, easily at home with the affairs of all the world.

Atticus was the great friend of Cicero. And their lifelong devotion is one of the great friendships of history. Atticus lived through one civil war after another. After each massacre and revolution he stood forth richer in the full light of day. In a time when it was a great achievement for a rich and well-known man to survive at all, he maintained his position as the acquaintance and confidant of men on every side of every contention. He spent many years in Athens and so managed to be away from Rome when it was very wise indeed to be absent from that mighty city. A shrewd master of all matters of buying and selling, an effective banker, a man who turned nearly everything he touched into money, he was also and very especially a man of great culture, of artistic taste, of learning not a little, a person of full and rich mind. Over a period of many years, whenever they were separated, Cicero was all the while writing him letters, sometimes more than one a day. And he was all the while writing to Cicero, though he saw to it that his letters have not survived.

There are hundreds of the letters of Cicero. They are written with a frankness which is thoroughly amazing. They completely reveal Cicero in his strength and in his weakness. And they make us know the period with an intimacy which has been the subject of much learned comment. For Cicero wrote about everybody else as well as about himself. And his comments are frank and witty and penetrating. You know the men about whom Cicero writes almost as well as you know Cicero. And all the while you are learning what a completely fascinating person Cicero must have been. He makes great demands upon Atticus in understanding and sympathy and practical help. But the friendship goes on year after year without a rift. Is he completely cast down when he has to leave Rome an exile? He reveals to Atticus every vibration of pain which tortures his quick nerves. Is he completely prostrated by the death of his daughter?

He writes about it to Atticus as he would write to no one else. Is he confronted by doubt and hesitation in one crisis after another? With no attempt to make a fine picture of himself, he allows his friend to see every thought which moves across the shuttle of his bewildered mind. Sometimes his letters are like impotent cries of pain. He never doubts his friend's devotion. He trusts him completely through the long and often tortured years. And he is never mistaken in his trust of his friend. Atticus is always everything that he expects him to be.

There were rich rewards to Atticus, of course. To read the searching and confidential analysis of every important public man of the period as that analysis was written by the most brilliant pen in Rome must have been a source of great satisfaction to the recipient of the letters. Atticus knew that when the time of struggling doubt was over, Cicero stood like a rock. He never made the mistake of thinking that even his most intense emotional disturbances were an indication of weakness. Atticus was no mean man of letters himself; and to share the inner thoughts, the swift movement of mind, and the opulent and racy expression of the varied thoughts of the most brilliant man of letters of the century was an experience to be richly prized.

Indeed, Atticus deserved the confidence of Cicero rather more than some readers of the letters through the centuries have deserved it. If there is such a thing as being jealous of the dead, Cicero has met more than his share of posthumous jealousy. But if one goes on reading the malicious critics of Cicero page after page, one soon discovers with a certain ironical amusement that they always contradict the corrosive criticism a little later by making some admission which rubs out the original remark. No doubt Cicero was human—sometimes all too human. But he stands up to the closest and even the most hostile analysis as do few of the men who have walked through periods when amidst wild confusion one world was dying and another was being born. Atticus professed the Epicurean philosophy; and, as

Epicurus taught his disciples to avoid all public responsibility, this relationship gave some color to the fashion in which Atticus avoided entanglement in public affairs. He survived Cicero, and was treated with friendliness and honor by Augustus.

IV

Cicero was, of course, deeply and constantly interested in orators and oratory. He wrote more than one discussion of the subject, approaching it in various ways. In *Brutus* or *On Famous Orators* he gives a striking and eminently fair and even generous history of oratory. Indeed it ought to be said with some emphasis that he always wrote of his rivals with a certain large-minded appreciation. If we define an egotist not as one who thinks too highly of himself so much as one who thinks too poorly of others (to appropriate a penetrating and thoughtful definition), then we may say that it is quite unfair to call Cicero an egotist. He is delightedly interested in everybody who does well what, as a matter of fact, he does best of all. He writes with discrimination, and his praise is all the more valuable because it is so careful. His history of oratory becomes something not unlike a wise criticism of oratory.

His great work *De Oratore* was published in 55 B.C., the product of a period when he was living in retirement. It is written in the form of a dialogue. There is not the play of many minds as found in the Platonic dialogues. Rather each speaker delivers something which is quite like a monologue. This Cicero claims to have been the manner of the dialogues of Aristotle. As none of these have survived, we must take Cicero's word for it. *De Oratore* consists of three books. They give an account of a discussion supposed to have been conducted in the year 91 B.C. at the Tusculan villa of Antonius, the grandfather of the famous and infamous triumvir, himself a famous orator. Another participant is the particular Crassus who was the most distinguished Roman orator before Cicero, and who had been Cicero's tutor in rhetoric when his great

successor was a lad. Cicero puts his own convictions into the mouth of Crassus. There are two younger orators, Rufus and Cotta, already commanding public speakers. Then there is the venerable Scaevola, a man of the greatest learning and a member of the famous Hellenizing Scipionic circle. He figures in the first book only, while the other four take part in the whole discussion.

Cicero's orators are a group of well-made men, happy in the easy interchange of the gracious courtesies of friendly speech. They are highly trained, and the disciplined quality of their minds is in constant evidence. There is the sort of casual reference to the most varied matters of history and biography and the many-sided aspects of Greek and Roman experience in things human, and perhaps especially in things political, which reflects the very genius of culture. There is a rather sharp emphasis on that which distinguishes man from the creatures below him that is characteristic of Cicero. There are many shrewd observations about the quality of good oratory and the proper training for the exercise of the orator's gift. But the heart of the matter is touched in the first discussion when it is declared in the introduction that no man can be a complete orator who has not attained a knowledge of all important subjects and arts. "For it is from knowledge that oratory must derive its beauty and fullness, and unless there is such knowledge well grasped and comprehended by the speaker, there must be something empty and almost childish about the utterance."

Later the claim is made by Antonius that it is the philosopher who strives to know the significance, nature, and causes of everything divine and human, while the orator is simply a man who can use language agreeable to the ear and arguments suited to convince. But Crassus stands by the conception that the orator must be a philosopher. He must have substance as well as style, or his oratory will be in vain. Catalus and Caesar join the party the next morning, and Book II carries the dis-

cussion into many questions of rhetoric and enters upon that forensic oratory which is said to be the most difficult of all. Caesar considers wit, and many sorts of wit are discussed. Methods for panegyric are set forth, and the training of the memory comes in for an aside.

Book III of *De Oratore* continues the discussion on the afternoon of the second day. We hear Crassus saying: "Every speech consists of matter and words, and the words cannot fall into place if you remove the matter, nor the matter have clarity if you remove the words." He stands by his insistence that oratory must have a very broad basis in culture, and says bluntly: "The genuine orator must have investigated and heard and read and discussed and handled and debated the whole of the contents of the life of mankind, inasmuch as that is the field of the orator's activity, the subject matter of his study." Style, ornament, and the use of words come in for consideration. The tones of the voice are discussed, and the appeal to the emotions also comes within the purview of these Roman orators. Literary references as well as biographical, historical, and philosophical illustrations abound. The whole discussion is a remarkable school of oratory.

The Asiatic and the Attic schools of oratory were in sharp conflict in the days of Cicero. The Asiatic school was opulent, expansive, with an almost overwhelming richness of speech. The Attic was reserved and restrained, and was characterized by a plain clarity which easily became a hard structure. Cicero was no doubt at first inclined too much toward the Asiatic school. Molon, who profoundly influenced him, did much to prune his style. But a sure instinct led Cicero to see that if lushness was the fault of one sort of speech, the other kind was in danger of a barren rigidity. He sought to find a middle ground where sincerity was not sacrificed to overemphasis and vitality was not sacrificed to an almost cold correctness. After his time the Attic form was for a time in the saddle. But by the time Quintilian had made Cicero in memory the master

of a school of oratory, there was a swing back to the methods of Rome's greatest orator.

As one reads and meditates about the various works of Cicero on oratory, the things which impress one most are the tremendously broad basis he would give to oratory in the widest knowledge and the fullest understanding. He knew all about the matters of style and method; but he never forgot that unless there is substance back of the glittering pageantry of speech, the oration is never worth the breath it costs to pronounce the words.

V

It is a matter of great significance for the very understanding of the history of the intellectual life of the West that we should study Cicero's work in the field of philosophy. In philosophy he included the whole field of culture and wisdom, but he can scarcely be said to have had a deep interest in metaphysics. He did care a good deal about the discussion of problems which later came to be included in the investigation of the theory of thought and knowledge. And he did study philosophy *per se*. Indeed, probably no man of his period knew the history of philosophy so thoroughly. He gave to Latin a philosophical vocabulary, and in doing this he did the same thing for Western Europe. From his early manhood he was interested in the whole tale of Greek philosophy, and in what he regarded as the time of forced absence from affairs of state during the period of Caesar's absolute power he set himself to a renewed pursuit of philosophical studies and to the making of philosophical sanctions available for the Latin mind.

Cicero was profoundly hostile to Epicureanism, and indeed seemed to come to distrust the very word pleasure and all for which it stood. He was deeply moved by the moral earnestness of Stoicism, and was more influenced by various forms of Stoic thought than he himself appreciated. He professed the most earnest regard for Plato and Aristotle. But it was the history

of their schools after the death of the masters which influenced him most. He professed to be a follower of the new Academic school, which had many skeptical tendencies and which worked out a doctrine of the probable which greatly fascinated Cicero. From this latter position he emphasized the importance of giving every position a day in court.

So in one dialogue after another one position is set forth by a representative of its tenets and an opposite position is set forth in similar fashion. Then there is an attempt to make a good practical estimate of the region in which the truth can probably be found. In such writings as *De Finibus* and *Academica* these matters come in for fascinating discussion. Cicero wavers a little in following the relativity of the New Academic group. His shrewd practicality is greatly attracted by a theory of knowledge which sees the probable rather than the certain as within the reach of the mind of man. This fits in with his sheer delight in discussing every side of every subject. But when it comes to matters for which he deeply cares, he desires a profounder assurance; and he is likely to slip back into the more sharp and definite convictions of an earlier form of the Academic school, some of whose positions indeed he saw reviving in compulsion in his own time.

As one reads the philosophic writing of Cicero, one is constantly impressed by the swift-moving quality of his mind, by the sharpness of the distinctions which he makes, and by the fashion in which he is all the while turning philosophical conclusions to practical interests. In many a subtle philosophical matter he shows far more definite acumen than one would ever have supposed to be possible. He really did make the philosophers, great and small, the companions of his mind. He set seriously about the task of thinking their thoughts after them. But he submitted all the vast process of investigation and meditation always to the adjudication of his own intelligence. One of the most fascinating things about reading the philosophical writing of Cicero is in just this matter of following so

closely his own intellectual adventures. He always distrusts positions which would disintegrate the moral structure of the world. He is always eager about positions which emphasize character and which will give a sound basis for the ethical life of the individual man, the state, and humanity. He has a very keen eye for the weaknesses of particular philosophic writers and schools of philosophy, and one has many a chuckle as he follows his varied and incisive criticisms of Epicureanism.

It was, of course, inevitable that in all these discussions Cicero would come straight against the matter of religion and its relation to the life of the individual and the state. He lived in the midst of a vast and most complicated system of religious belief and practice. How did he work out his own relation to these things, and what guidance did he give to other men in these matters? They come up for consideration in *De Natura Deorum* and in *De Divinatione* especially. Here, as always, Cicero puts the best that can be said for a certain attitude in the mouth of one speaker and submits that discussion to critical analysis. He says all that can be said for the state religion in stately and urbane fashion. Then he submits divination to sharp and caustic and very skeptical attack. In *De Legibus*, however, the state religion comes in for a rather different sort of consideration as he discusses the laws governing its practice. He is anxious not to be thought the foe of religion because he is skeptical about certain practices and certain beliefs. There is one golden sentence in *De Legibus* which has permanent value:

Indeed what is more true than that no one ought to be so foolishly proud as to think that though reason and intelligence exist in himself, they do not exist in the heavens and the universe, or that those things which can hardly be understood by the highest reasoning powers of the human intellect are guided by no reason at all.

As a statesman he realizes the value of the faith and practice of religion for public order. As a man of skeptical intelligence he has many hesitations and positive areas of disbelief.

But underneath all his questioning there is a sense of moral and spiritual meaning in the universe which contemporary cults do not at all satisfy. After the death of his daughter he wrote:

No beginning of souls can be discovered on earth; for there is no trace of blending or combination in souls or any particle that would seem born or fashioned from earth, nothing even that partakes of moist or airy or fiery. For in these elements there is nothing to possess the power of memory, thought, or reflection, nothing capable of retaining the past or foreseeing the future and grasping the present—and these capacities alone are divine—and never will there be found any source from which they can come to men except from God.

Cicero was not a spiritual genius who could follow these insights into the depths of religion. But they move along lines which will be answered by profound assertions of the Christian religion. G. C. Richards in *Cicero, A Study* has remarked: "The marvel is that Christian writers found so little in Cicero to correct."

VI

As we have already seen, it is always actual life which is teasing the imagination and searching the intelligence of Cicero. And now he comes to closer grips with the actual problems of human experience. In the *Tusculan Disputations* he confronts the fear of death; he faces the problem of the endurance of pain, the alleviation of distress, the dealing with the many disorders of the soul; and he argues firmly and stoutly that virtue is sufficient for a happy life. Cicero was confronting the disintegration of a society which lacked moral basis and which, above everything, needed character to give stability to its intelligence. And he considered these matters with the utmost seriousness. It is significant that the wittiest mind of Rome, in this period of the clash of vigorous minds and of men of

powerful intelligence, was most deeply moved when he considered the moral foundations of the life of an individual and of a state.

In *De Officiis*—written for his young son, aged twenty-one, who as a student at Athens was rather more inclined to be interested in wild oats than in philosophic study or the discipline of the mind—we come upon Cicero's most popular work. Frederick the Great is quoted as saying that this is the best work on morals that has been or can be written. Book I treats of moral goodness. Book II treats of expediency. Book III treats of the conflict between the right and the expedient. But the heart of the position of Cicero is revealed in one famous sentence:

Now we find that the essential activity of the spirit is twofold: one force is appetite (that is *horme* in Greek), which impels a man this way and that: the other is reason, which teaches and explains what should be done and what should be left undone. The result is that reason commands, appetite obeys.

The good life, then, is the life in which the appetites are controlled by the reason. Cicero amplifies his position as to what this involves when he says:

All that is morally right rises from some one of four sources: it is concerned either with the full perception and intelligent development of the true: or with the conservation of organized society, with the rendering to every man his due, and with the faithful discharge of obligations assumed: or with the greatness and strength of a noble and invincible spirit: or with the orderliness and moderation of everything that is said and done, wherein consist temperance and self-control.

The work is full of shrewd observations:

In the matter of a promise one must always consider the meaning and not the mere words. . . . Nothing which lacks justice can be morally right. . . . We must school ourselves to affability. . . . We

should therefore in our dealings with people show what I may call reverence toward all men.

It is characteristic of what, in the terminology of a later age, we may call the humanism of Cicero that we find him saying that we should

keep before our eyes how far superior man is by nature to cattle and the other beasts; man's mind is nurtured by study and meditation; he is always either investigating or doing, and he is captivated by the pleasures of seeing and hearing.

He refers with profound conviction to the "dignity of man." Endless matters are discussed, always with common sense and insight. It is not surprising that, though incidental, Cicero's advice about conversation has been eagerly quoted:

It should be easy and not in the least dogmatic; it should have the spice of wit. And one who engages in conversation should not debar others from participating in it, as if he were entering upon a private monopoly; but as in other things, so in general conversation he should think it not unfair for each to have his turn. He should observe first and foremost what the subject of conversation is. If it is grave, he should treat it with seriousness: if humorous, with wit. And above all he should be on the watch that his conversation shall not betray some defect in his character. This is most likely to occur when people in jest or earnest take delight in making malicious and slanderous statements about the absent on purpose to injure their reputations. . . . If the talk begins to drift off to other channels [from the actual subject under discussion], pains should be taken to bring it back again to the matter in hand—but with due consideration of the company present: for we are not all interested in the same things at all times or in the same degree. We must observe too how far the conversation is agreeable, and as it had a reason for beginning, so there should be a point to close it tactfully.

Cicero declares that the duties which have to do with justice must be given precedence over those which have to do with

the pursuit of knowledge. Nothing is more sacred than the welfare of our fellow men. It is not surprising that Petrarch said that sometimes one would fancy he was reading not a pagan philosopher but a Christian apostle. When a Roman was writing about moral goodness, the fact that Rome was increasingly the ruler of the world made it inevitable that these problems would be approached with a certain type of mind. The question of expediency was sure to loom large. Cicero is, of course, impressed by the place of co-operation in all successful life and achievement. And it may almost be said that he takes it for granted that unless the expedient contradicts some principle of right or justice, the expedient should be followed. But he faces certain dangers confronting the expedient type of mind very frankly. "Things are in a bad way when that which should be obtained by merit is attempted by money." Through good will and confidence and esteem on the part of those with whom we deal, important results may be obtained. Indeed, justice is the best way to that popularity which is so important in considering expediency. The ways of winning a good name, which has such practical value, are considered. The place of generosity in the expedient life is to be understood, and the greater value which belongs to gifts of service rather than to gifts of money. And Cicero returns to justice as the basis of all right expediency.

But inevitably there will be times when the right and the expedient seem to conflict. What are we to do then? Cicero insists that the conflict is never real. Genuine expediency can never conflict with moral rectitude. A really noble man always prefers the life which is helpful to others to the life of mere pleasure. In the long run the interest of the individual coincides with the common good. Good men aim to obtain not security but the right. Cruelty, though it may sometimes seem useful, can never really be expedient. The advantages coming from the concealment of truth are only temporary. The civil law must be made to conform to the moral law. Material gain can

never compensate for moral loss. All this and more is said with a wealth of illustration and historical parallel. The book is a triumphant assertion of the fact that the dilemma between the right and the expedient simply vanishes away if we look deeply and if we consider the whole future. Cicero approaches all moral problems deeply anxious about those attitudes and especially those actions which would "take away from man all that makes him man." Clearly the capacity for making moral distinctions and the capacity for moral loyalty are for him the great things about humanity.

VII

Cicero greatly admired Plato's *Republic* and the later book of Plato entitled *Laws*. This admiration led him to consider the writing of a book on each of these themes. While by no means revealing the depth of thought or understanding of Plato, these two works are very important as setting forth the philosophy of the state and many significant opinions and convictions of a great Roman statesman; and it is unfortunate that so little of *De Re Publica* has come down to us and that at least two books of the laws seem to have been lost. Cicero considers kingship and aristocracy and democracy as forms of government. Then he goes over the history of the Roman state to illustrate the thesis that Rome in its republican form represents a synthesis of the best elements in these three types, and so represents an ideal form of government, reached not so much through philosophic thought as through practical experience, though capable of ample philosophical justification. To Cicero it is important that the highest orders—the patrician and the equestrian—should work harmoniously together, and that the people should be given significant voting power. The theory of mutual balancing and checking became fundamental in very important political theories in the West.

The laws are a means of making justice effective. There are laws for religious observance and laws for state officials. Con-

crete statements of legal demand are set forth. The action of the mind of a responsible official dealing with important problems is seen. If we had the other books of the laws, we would have light on many important matters.

De Re Publica contains the *Dream of Scipio*, a piece of brilliant mysticism which sees the best men of the past living the pure and exalted life of the spirit in the Milky Way, and having their sense of that harmony which they have always pursued brought to satisfaction as they listen to the music of the spheres.

VIII

Cicero's *De Senectute* has achieved great and widespread fame. Probably no writing about old age has surpassed it in influence. Cicero wrote the book within a year or so of the time of his death, considering himself an old man. From the time of Caesar's complete dominance he had been practically excluded from those activities to which he had given thirty years full of labor and fame and power. He retreated to his country villas, and in their quiet devoted himself to writing. After the death of his greatly loved daughter he tried to rise out of his first lethargy and escape from his grief by a perfect fever of composition. As he contemplated the rich and various years and the oncoming reign of old age, he was full of courage. Even a man of little wealth, if he was rich in loyalty, had much to carry into his declining years. The body lost virile vitality much sooner than the mind, and by vigorous mental effort the power of the mind could be carried far into old age. And, after all, the pleasures of the mind were the greatest pleasures of all. As a matter of fact, fools charged to old age that which was produced by their own vices and had nothing to do with age at all. Character and judgment remain when muscular strength and agility have weakened. The old can go on adding to their knowledge and they can cultivate their gardens. Cato learned Greek after he was an old man. When their minds are alert

and their experience and knowledge rich, old men have a particular fascination for brilliant young men who delight in their society. Conversation is one of the characteristic joys of the old. "No teachers of the liberal arts should be considered unhappy even though their bodily vigour may have waned and failed." A man does not have to become sour-tempered because he is old. Of death he wrote: "The nearer I approach death the more I feel like one who is in sight of land at last and is about to anchor in his home port after a long voyage. . . . I quit life as if it were an inn and not a home. . . . The soul is about to set out for a better country."

In *De Amicitia*, Cicero was writing of something very near to his own heart. He was a great friend. And he carried his faith in friendship with him to the end. The work was dedicated to his great and trusted friend Atticus, as had been his book on old age. Friendship can exist only among good men. They alone are capable of meeting its demands. "Friendship adds a brighter radiance to prosperity and lessens the burden of adversity by dividing and sharing it." In a true friend a man sees "a sort of lamp of uprightness and virtue." We do not put our favors out at interest, but are by nature given to acts of kindness. "A great law of friendship is never to ask that which is dishonorable or to do that which is dishonorable even if asked." True friendship is permanent. Cicero despises the clever sentence which suggests that we should love as if we were going to hate. "It is impossible for a man to be loyal whose nature is full of twists and turnings." The real friend is, as it were, another self.

Once again in his treatment of friendship we see the high seriousness of Cicero's character and the sterling quality of his essential standards. To him friendship is virtue loyally giving itself to another. Everything a man possesses of knowledge and understanding is more precious because he can share it with his friend. He desires the dignity and honor of his friend, and he rejoices simply and sincerely in his friend's

success and prosperity. A real life of the mind can come to its consummation only as its experiences and its interests are shared with another. A truth is finally possessed as it is made available to a friend. The depth of an insight is finally realized as it strikes fire in the mind of a friend. Atticus and Cicero shared no end of intellectual interests. Each had much to give to the other. Cicero never makes a literary reference without seeing the eyes of his friend brighten as he reads his letter. Common experiences and common loyalties become a part of the very texture of friendship. As we read *De Amicitia*, we realize all the while that it is simply the autobiography of Cicero turned into general observations and enriched by his knowledge of the part friendship plays in the life of good men. In many ways his world may be falling apart. But he can still believe in the ultimate soundness and decency of things as long as he has true friends—indeed, as long as he has a true friend. Two thousand years fade away, and we are able to see the flash of his eye and to sense the beating of his heart as Cicero writes of friendship.

IX

And what of the life of Cicero as a public speaker or, as the Romans would have said, as an orator? The first thing to say is that everything he had acquired as a result of study, everything which he had made his own through large and varied experience, and everything which he brought to sharp focus through his writing was wrought into the texture of his public speech. His activity in this field took three forms. There were the speeches in suits of law. There were addresses in the senate. And there were addresses to the assembly of the people.

Cicero spoke both in prosecution and in defense. In later years he seems to have preferred taking the case for the defense and practically to have confined his legal work to such cases. Some writers have spoken in depreciation of his knowledge of law. But as a matter of fact he was highly trained, and he seems

always to know just the legal point which will be of importance in the cases which he is trying. In a sense, like the lawyers of his time and of later centuries, he took cases as they came. But he had a conscience about his legal work. There were methods he would not use in furthering either prosecution or defense. And there were cases which he took with the greatest reluctance and preferred not to take at all. He was always at his best when the moral and legal issue was clear and just. Though he was ready to say that not everything he said in trying a case must be taken as a part of his own view of life, one who knows his actual positions in the great matters of thought and action knows that they appear repeatedly in his addresses in suits at law. He was a gifted artist in the arrangement of his material. He used every power of dramatic presentation to force his points home and to make his arguments not only clear but compelling. He knew that emotion at its best is insight on fire, and that he had brought a conclusion into the realm of actual human experience when his hearers blazed with indignation or melted in sympathy. Then he had come home to their very minds and hearts. He did all this with the greatest possible skill.

Of course, a man is moving in dangerous territory when he uses such powers. But it is not always seen that he is moving in very frigid and lifeless territory when he does not use them at all. Cicero always tried to uncover legal rights in their relation to genuine human values. He seems all the while to be saying: "What does this legal principle and this long-established legal practice mean as a part of the everyday experience of people who must find their way through this none-too-easy world?" Sometimes he took the greatest risks and showed an unusual courage, as when in the defense of a client he found it necessary to attack a favorite of Sulla and, by implication at least, to show what he thought of a dictatorship which was crashing its way right through the rights of men. That he did this sort of thing as a very young man shows of what stuff

he was made. He gathered his material with meticulous care, and sometimes, as in the case of Verres, that material was so convincing that all that was necessary was to get it clearly set forth. Once and again in later life he came to the rescue of men who had been his friends in times when their friendship was greatly needed.

While we must admit that the sheer rush of his oratorical power must have been at times little less than overwhelming, it is important to remember his capacity for clear analysis; for finding the word which itself was like a sword, the phrase which was like an open door revealing sudden vistas of meaning; and for conducting a process of argument which, though commanding and sometimes intricate, was so full of vitality that it secured fascinated and intense attention. It is important to remember all these things when we are estimating and judging Cicero as he stood at the bar. He had, after he learned how to use it, a magnificent voice. First he met. Then he conquered. Then he outdistanced all his rivals at the bar. And when once his position was established, nobody took the trouble to deny his pre-eminence in his own field.

In the senate Cicero could be urbane and suave; with fine success he could make a speech full of the old Roman dignity. But he was at his best when a crisis brought out all of his powers. He had to deal with such a situation when he had to confront the conspiracy of Catiline in the days of his consulate. As we have seen, this corrupt young nobleman was ready to disrupt the state for the sake of recouping his own fortunes. Joined with him were many other desperate men who were in the same position. The situation was complicated by the fact that men in high position were ready to fish in troubled waters and to use such men for the furtherance of their own plans. Catiline tried to murder Cicero. At last in sheer desperation he worked out an elaborate conspiracy to overthrow the state. Of course it involved wholesale murder and the end of anything like disciplined order based on justice. The plans

were made with such skill that the plot might well have succeeded. It was Cicero, and practically Cicero alone, who saved the state. We have already followed the series of powerful orations delivered in the presence of Catiline when he attacked the conspirators and revealed the extent of the conspiracy. Gathering evidence with the greatest skill, he overwhelmed with evidence of their guilt conspirators who remained in Rome after Catiline had left the city. These speeches reveal complete courage and the power to set forth the elements of a tragic situation with almost overwhelming effectiveness. It was one of those situations when words became deeds, and Cicero knew how to be a master of deeds as well as speech.

Toward the end, and in some ways at the very climax, of his career, Cicero delivered the so-called Philippics (to which reference has already been made) against Antony. Every power of keen intellect and overwhelming speech is combined in these utterances. Cicero has become the outstanding man in Rome. He holds the threads of a complicated situation in his hands. There are foes who would like to see him fall. There are weak-kneed apostles of appeasement who would like to treat with a traitor. There are generals in the field to encourage. There is that amazing young man Octavius to be accepted and used and guided. All this must be interpreted to the senate. And all the while the figure of Antony, who has already brought such injustice to Rome and is ready to destroy the state and all who believe in a just and orderly life, must be kept in all its sinister quality and terrible threat before the minds of the senators. All this Cicero does with a command of facts, a fertility of resource, and a command of convincing invective which are amazing even after more than two thousand years. Sometimes he gets all that he wants. Sometimes he gets part of what he wants. But he is always at the center of the situation, wielding the greatest and the most far-reaching influence. It was his last great battle for the Republic; and if the young

heir of Caesar had not betrayed him after the defeat of Antony, he would have kept the Republic alive.

In all times of crisis, events had to be interpreted to the people in popular addresses. And here Cicero spoke to the people as one of them. He made the name "Roman" the symbol of a rich and proud inheritance. With utter simplicity and commanding power he set forth situations and analyzed conditions. The people felt that they were receiving the intimate confidence of their greatest leader. The orator as a statesman was not to have a more commanding expression until Winston Churchill became the voice of the British people in the grimmest days of the Second World War.

X

Cicero declared in the Republic that "though others may be called men, only those are men who are perfected in the arts appropriate to humanity." This recurring emphasis on the human as a clue to the meaning of human life and a standard of judgment makes us wonder that Cicero, who made such an important contribution to the vocabulary of Western Europe, did not coin the word humanism. Indeed, he did everything short of using the name. He quoted with deeper meaning Terence's word that nothing relevant to humanity was alien to him. He followed with fascinated interest, insofar as he could come to know it, the whole story of the human mind in action. He saw reason in control of appetite as the very consummation of human life. Because the human mind had come to finest flower in Athens, he was a perpetual student of everything which had given distinction to the Greek mind. Because human experience was best reflected in literature, he was an eager reader of every literary masterpiece upon which he could lay his hand. Because philosophy was always attempting to make human knowledge articulate and coherent and comprehensive, he was a constant student of philosophy. Because the creature endowed with reason used words as the instrument of his

thought, his experience, and the very ongoing of his life, he was a joyous and perpetual student of words. To extort the last bit of meaning from a word and to fill every phrase with the fullest meaning and the richest reflection of experience were his constant endeavor.

Because the orator used the full heritage of experience and the closest powers of thought and the deepest sense of the freight of that emotion which is thought become passionate to make his utterances noble and commanding and compelling, he was a perpetual student of oratory and became a master in the full use of the orator's gifts and powers. Because the state was the supreme expression of men's attempt to live together wisely and fruitfully according to the dictates and practice of reason, he was a life-long student of statecraft and a statesman who was always seeking to make his insights politically effective. Because he saw that without freedom there is no good life for man, or for that collection of men called the state, he was utterly devoted to liberty and hated tyranny with a passion beyond the power of even his volcanic words to express. Because the human spirit found singular satisfaction in loyal and gracious friendship, he was himself the greatest sort of friend, and he wrote of friendship with noble felicity. He saw with complete clarity that the greatest human tragedy is man's betrayal of his humanity. And so he was the fighting foe of disintegrating falseness and injustice and evil, even as he was the devoted advocate of all that he understood to make life good.

He was a very human person who lived intensely and met experience with an emotional velocity which sometimes tore with pain at his vitals. His joy was as intense as his pain, and he made a good and honest endeavor to subject each to that disciplined control without which he did not believe the good life to be possible. He played with his thoughts and his experiences and his analysis of men with endless vivacity. Sometimes his wit got the best of him and became his foe. He had an almost

childlike delight in his own achievement. But this was quite equaled by his appreciation of the achievements of others. His central loyalty became as firm as steel. And he met death with unhesitating courage. One secret of his enduring charm can be found in his own confession that "his enmities were mortal, and his friendships eternal."

Erasmus

ARISTOTLE DIED in the last quarter of the fourth century B.C. Cicero died a few years after the middle of the first century B.C. Something over fifteen hundred years later Erasmus was born. Much had happened in the world during this millennium and a half. The Roman Republic, changed into the Roman Empire, had passed through its centuries of brilliance and decay, of achievement and tragedy, and the fall of Rome had come in A.D. 476. The Eastern Empire had half slumbered and half lived through many centuries of checkered life, and at last Constantinople had fallen in 1453. The barbarians had burst across the river barriers formed by the Rhine and the Danube, and in region after region had swept aside the old forms of life; in various ways and in various combinations with the people of the lands they had conquered, they had become the basis of new forms of national life.

Most of all, Christianity had emerged in a little province at the edge of the Mediterranean Sea and had moved out upon its great career of conquest in the world. As it mastered men's minds and hearts, it became the greatest religious force in the world; and as it obtained secular mastery over men and states, it became an overwhelmingly great political force. Germany became the center of the high claims of the monarchs of the Holy Roman Empire. Rome became the center of the political claims of a great spiritual authority. Strong emperors dominated weak popes. Strong popes dominated weak emperors. When both were strong, they fought for supremacy. The struggle

gives a characteristic quality to the life of the period we call the Middle Ages. Christianity became an intellectual force as well as a spiritual influence and a political power. The Greek fathers saw the highest human fulfillment in the coming of Christ. The Latin fathers, turned brilliant masters of logic and preoccupied with the moral tragedy of the world, worked out a mighty dialectic of redemption centering in the cross of Christ. Thomas Aquinas in the *Summa* set out to bend all knowledge to the purposes of this vast interpretation.

Another mighty religion had swept into Europe from Arabia. The Cross and the Crescent met in battle array. The battle of Tours left Europe free from the danger of Islamic domination. But the fall of Constantinople left the Moslems in control in the East. It did more. For the scholars who fled west from the great and conquered city brought to Western Europe that Greek knowledge and culture which had come so near to perishing during the centuries after the barbarian conquest. And the revival of learning took forms which inevitably flowered in the Renaissance. The vast and acute intelligence of the Western fathers had fallen upon a certain decadence, and had produced the hair-splitting barrenness against which the new learning protested. In Italy the new spirit was inclined to take pagan forms. As it penetrated into the North, it took on a nobler seriousness. The Church itself, with all its imperial and splendid quality, had been invaded by many a corruption. Voices calling for reform were heard. At first they spoke in low tones. Then they became louder and louder. The stage was set for tremendous events in the mind, the heart, the conscience, and the political activities of man.

I

There is a certain confusion about the precise date of Erasmus' birth. His own statements do not actually agree with one another. There is a tendency to put the year of his birth farther back as his own life goes on. This seems to be connected with

the irregularity of his own entrance into the world. In any event, we may be sure that he was born in or a few years before 1469. The name Erasmus represents a Greek form of the name of his father, Gerard; and Desiderius represents a Latin form of the same name. He called himself Desiderius Erasmus Roterodamus.

We see him as a schoolboy at Gouda, a choirboy at Utrecht, and as a pupil in a school at Deventer. He seems to have been dull enough when subjected to a mechanical round of grammatical study. But once his mind was awakened by that love of letters which mastered his whole life, his progress was rapid. We may picture him as a lonely boy inclined to emotional friendships and with a heart waiting to be mastered by some great loyalty. Perhaps the sense that he did not definitely belong anywhere had something to do with his becoming a cosmopolitan, a citizen of the whole civilized world, rather than of any one country.

The Brothers of the Common Life conducted the school at Deventer and the school which Erasmus next attended. The simple and undogmatic piety of this tradition clearly entered very deeply into the life of the young student. He ignored it, perhaps forgot it, only to come back to it for the very sources of his religious life. The Brothers of the Common Life in their own way were deeply interested in the humanities, and so Erasmus had the opportunity to meet and learn to know those classic writers who took their places among his greatest friends.

His father was a priest and supported himself in the days before printing by making copies of manuscripts. In 1484 he died, leaving some sort of property which the guardians of Erasmus and his brother Peter either mismanaged or wasted. An attempt was made to persuade the two lads to enter monastic life. Erasmus was the more high-spirited of the two, and he attempted with some success to stiffen resistance in his brother. But at last they gave in, and in due time Erasmus found himself an Augustinian canon. He was allowed to continue his classical

studies. Long since he had passed beyond his masters, and indeed had made for school use a synopsis of Lorenzo Valla's *Elegancies of Latin*. Chafing under the monastic discipline which neither physically, intellectually, or socially fitted his particular needs; unhappy among slow-witted men while his own awakened mind was moving like quicksilver; longing for a world which answered to the amazing life his mind had discovered, Erasmus passed his days restlessly longing for what to him would be both escape and emancipation. His alert young scholarship had already commanded attention, and at length the way opened for him to become the Latin secretary of the bishop of Cambrai, who would need his skilled services if he achieved his ambition of possessing a cardinal's cap. Nothing came to this hope, but at the episcopal court Erasmus must have made progress in that urbanity which characterized his later life. Human life with the tug of varied interests moved energetically about him. His shrewd eyes were ready for that photographic observation whose quality was later revealed in the unrivaled vividness of his descriptions of life as it was actually lived.

His soul, however, was hydroptic with a sacred thirst for knowledge, and finally he secured an opportunity to go to the University of Paris for study. So at the age of about twenty-five Erasmus found himself in Paris. He was a priest. He was studying theology. He entered the college of Montaigu, where life was unsanitary and the food incredibly poor. He did his work and in due season became a bachelor of theology. But his real love was for letters, and he never overcame his disgust for artificial and hair-splitting methods of theological study. He began to make friends with brilliant men whose devotion was to the classics, not always as noble in character as keen in intelligence. How far the character of Erasmus suffered it is difficult to say. But his passion for scholarship, his practical good sense, and a certain core of moral and religious conviction kept him from those extremes of dissipation which might have wrecked his whole career. The strain of bad food and

unsanitary environment was too much for his health, however, and he was forced to go back to Holland to recuperate. When he returned to Paris, he took pupils in order to support himself, and so came to know such men as the English Lord Mountjoy, who was to be his great and permanent friend. He now lived in more sanitary surroundings. He was busy with the classics. He played with writing poetry. He was becoming known to the intellectuals of Paris.

When he was about thirty years of age, Erasmus paid his first visit to England. He was the guest of the young Lord Mountjoy. During all the years of his apprenticeship Erasmus, with his instinct for good breeding, had become the sort of person who could be taken anywhere and introduced into the highest and most cultivated society. He was even taken to Eltham palace where he was introduced to a group of the children of the king, including the future Henry VIII. He possessed a wit and a scholarship which made him welcome among those of most highly disciplined mind and most cultivated intelligence. He went to Oxford and met Colet, who had a profound influence in directing his mind toward bringing classical scholarship to the study of the scriptures and confirming his growing conviction that the very end of the study of letters is the cultivation of the good life. In London he met a group of notable humanists who welcomed him to their intimate comradeship. Chief of these was Thomas More, to whom his heart became bound by bands of steel.

Before long Erasmus was back in Paris, bent now upon the mastery of Greek, but pursuing his other classical studies with constant avidity. As we follow his life with its perpetual journeys, we must remember that wherever he was he carried on the life of a scholar with amazing earnestness and constancy. Life was in many ways difficult. His freedom must be conserved, and so he refused one position after another which would have brought wealth but would have made a life of intense devotion to learning impossible, or would have caught

him in the net of compromising relationships. He was forced to seek for patrons, and sometimes we shrink from the flattery which he paid as a price for help. But his deeper integrity remained untouched. We see him in England. The opportunity to go to Italy at last arrived. He received a doctor's degree from an Italian university, was received with honor by men who represented the highest intellectual attainment, established relations with the great printing house of Aldus Manutius, and in various cities worked with his usual breath-taking intensity.

An alluring invitation came from England, where Henry VIII, brilliant patron of the humanities, was on the throne. Erasmus accepted and as he journeyed played with the thoughts which found immortal expression in the *Praise of Folly*. In England he found companions after his own heart and a professorship at Cambridge. He had already made much of that anthology of fine classical writing which came forth in the various editions of the *Adages*. He was busy with various tasks. There was his constant preoccupation with the study of the New Testament. There was his continued devotion to the writings of Jerome. There was his study of Seneca. At the house of More he whiled away time not engaged in other pursuits in writing out the *Praise of Folly*. Much was done for him financially in England. But gradually it appeared that nothing really corresponding to the glittering hopes with which he had journeyed to England was to come to him. He found great friends. He was with men who in some real sense could look at him level-eyed. He was a confidant in the intellectual and educational plans of Colet. And his spirit was refreshed by his intimacy with More. With the full view of later knowledge we can see that it was fortunate that he did not decide to make England his permanent home. As wisely as if he could have foreseen later terrible days and the tragic deaths of More and Fisher, he decided to turn his steps once more to the continent.

In Germany, Erasmus was received as he journeyed about in such a fashion as made his travels a sort of perpetual triumph.

The printing of his books was, of course, a very important matter. His connection with Johann Froben became established, and Basle became a sort of center from which he went out and to which he returned. In 1515 he published the first edition of his New Testament. It contained his own notes and his new Latin translation. He was surrounded by men who shared his own pursuits and passions, and was easily their leader and master. Sometimes he journeyed to England. His last visit to that land of many friends was in 1517.

The complications resulting from the irregularity of his birth and the other complications connected with his relation to his monastery from which he had long been absent were all resolved in such a fashion as to give him complete freedom and opportunity by an action of the Pope which was made effective while he was in England. His income was becoming more ample. Gifts poured in upon him. He had a permanent income from England. In 1515 he had been appointed a Councilor of the Empire. This position not only made possible important political relationship and opportunities, but brought a yearly salary.

As time went on, Erasmus became known to all the intellectual leaders of Europe. He never stayed more than eight consecutive years in any one city. He lived in many places, and his travels were very frequent. He was all the while trying to find a place really suitable to his delicate health. Sometimes the appearance of the plague drove him from a particular town. Sometimes he was guided by the expedition of his intellectual pursuits or the arrangements for printing. Sometimes his movements were the result of his political responsibilities. He was now at the height of his fame. He was the prince of the intellectuals of Europe. Political and religious leaders of many lands were anxious to secure his influence and his presence. England desired him to make his lot with the English. In France the king desired him to come to Paris. In Italy there was a great eagerness to have him come to Rome. The greatest honors were

offered to him. He accepted only those which would not invade his freedom. And he had a sure instinct for the avoidance of too long a stay in lands where lofty position would have involved intellectual and spiritual subservience. So, moving from place to place, the intimate of kings and statesmen and high ecclesiastics, writing letters which were prized by important people all over Europe, Erasmus drove himself with a laborious application to great tasks of scholarship and interpretation which fill one with wonder that his slight frame could sustain the weight he put upon it. Editions of classical writers, biblical texts, paraphrases, and interpretations, satires, and studies of manifold themes kept pouring forth from his pen. Men of learning everywhere were fascinated, and in a measure dominated, by this brilliant learning and this sheer genius for effective speech. Europe laughed at his satires, holding its sides with mirth. But it never forgot the points he made. And the shafts of his satire never left a situation quite as he had found it.

The biting tongue and the more biting pen of Erasmus made many enemies. Those who moved uneasily under the force of his deadly attack were at first uncomfortable, then sharply annoyed, then angry, and at last full of hatred. The monks, when they found themselves subject to the sardonic laughter of the whole world, became his bitter foes. The exponents of conventional theology in Paris regarded Erasmus as a literary upstart who must be put down.

Then came the world-shaking movement led by Luther. In every way it produced confusion in the life of Erasmus. In one way he had seemed to prepare the way for Luther, and the German leader at first looked up to Erasmus as in a way the justifier of his own positions. Actually the two were different men working in different fashions, and, each being what he was, a break was inevitable. Erasmus was always a loyal son of the church, desiring to reform it from within. Luther became a revolutionist who felt that there was no hope in the old church and that his work must be done outside it. The

church threw him out. He excommunicated the church. Luther's speech was explosive and dramatic, and often he went to lengths of bitter speech which aroused complete distaste in Erasmus. When Luther was pursued by the hostility of both church and empire, his life hanging by a thread, he felt that Erasmus should be standing with him. This he felt was the logic of Erasmus' position, and only cowardice could hold him back. On the other hand, Erasmus felt that the extremes of Luther were a menace to everything he was trying to do. He was managing with amazing courage to set forth truths hated by men in high places, and yet to keep the confidence of the greatest leaders in church and state. It is not too much to say that he saved the life of Luther when the great German was in direct danger. But he saw intellectual and moral and political anarchy in the path which Luther was taking. The terrible revolt of the peasants, and many a smaller bit of lawlessness, seemed to confirm him. He could not follow Luther. Yet Erasmus was in hard straits. He did not want the foes of Luther to conquer. That would be like the death of hope. But he thought that Luther was becoming his own worst foe and that for him to conquer would bring confusion to the world. Sometimes he changed the city of his habitation because of these tumults. Lutherans suspected him because he would not go the whole way with Luther. Many old Catholics suspected him because he continued to use his great influence to save Luther from being completely crushed. At last both houses began to cry: "A plague upon Erasmus!"

The utter courage with which he lived his increasingly lonely life and refused to compromise his own standards of living and thinking amazes the reader who follows in detail the story of his life through these difficult years. He could never get away from the gay mirth of his mind. In a way that was a priceless weapon. If he could laugh the excesses and evils out of existence, how much better that would be than revolution and bloodshed! He wrote lightly when he felt profoundly. But if he declared that he had no gift for martyrdom, you were likely to find that he

had just written or was just about to write a letter to the Pope or to the Emperor or to someone in high authority in church or state which might well have brought his life down in ruin. For a period he made Basle his home and gave much time to the press of Froben, which now became the greatest of the presses of Europe. His own work and his work in guiding others almost surpasses belief. Great works came pouring from the press, and his hand was upon them all. Scholarship, endless problems in church and state, constant discussion of great matters, the attempt to interpret the Christian life in his turbulent age, absorbed him. Froben died, and the triumph of the Reformers in Basle with much turbulence made it wise for Erasmus to leave. He chose Freiburg, where he was received with the greatest respect and given the use of a palace, not completely finished and previously intended for the Emperor Maximilian, which was his home for half a dozen years. In 1535 he returned to Basle. He was now an old man living in retirement. The highest honors, including a cardinal's hat, were offered to him. Many felt that he alone was living above the conflict and that he alone might be a successful mediator in an attempt to restore peace which would give new vitality to the church and to the empire. But he was nearing his end. First he was confined to his room. Then he was confined to his bed. The most distressing news came from England. The death of Fisher was a crushing blow. The death of More fairly broke his heart. He had no greater wish than to join his friend in the place where beyond these voices there is peace. But he worked to the very last. All his hopes might be dashed to pieces. Nothing could break his loyalty to those great tasks of learning and interpretation to which he had set his hand. He died June 11, 1536.

II

I have spoken of only a few of the cities associated in one way or another with the name of Erasmus. But he was, as we have seen, a man of many towns, a man of many lands, and a

man who, if he did not look upon the world, in the language of a religious leader of a later century, as his parish, did look upon all the world as belonging to his kingdom of the mind. And over that kingdom he exercised a right royal way. He must have had more knowledge of English and French and German—and, of course, of Dutch—and of other languages than he admits. But Latin was the language of his speech. And Latin was the language of his pen. It was spoken by educated men everywhere in Europe. So Erasmus could speak in Latin everywhere. And what he wrote in Latin was read by knowledgeable men everywhere in Europe. Believing deeply in one Christian world, he believed earnestly in the one language which would make that one world possible. To him Latin was indeed a living speech, and he made it more living than he found it. With all his love for Cicero and his urbane and gracious speech, he had only scorn for those literal Ciceronians who would make the very vocabulary and sentence structure of Cicero the be-all and the end-all of the form of their writing. He set contemporary experience circulating in the blood of Latin words and sentences. And he created a Latin style luminous with the qualities of his own mind and rich with the energies of his own vitality.

I have not been able to speak—who indeed could be able to speak?—of the men of many lands who felt the fascination of his conversation, the lightning flash of his wit, and the charm of his personality. There is a sense, perhaps not quite meant by Phillips Brooks when he used the phrase in a later century, in which Erasmus was all the while giving forth truth through his personality. He always passed a thought through his own mind and enriched it by all the qualities of his many-sided experience before he expressed it. He was a small man. But his figures and his movements were characterized by a certain symmetry and grace. His eyes were blue. His hair had a quality of yellow. He was in manner the polished and gracious gentleman. He made those to whom he was talking feel that they had caught his attention and had captured his interest. His deep affection was

reserved for few. But a certain air of bright friendliness was always characteristic of him. Because the whole world of letters was alive in his mind, it came to life in his conversation. Neither his speech nor his writing was overloaded with learning. But the riches of his knowledge came forth so spontaneously and so naturally that he carried along even the person who did not share his knowledge quite simply and happily. His brain was active every moment. And as we may have seen already and will certainly see later, it was busy not merely about the subtle matters of scholarship and the many-sided problems of politics and religion. Nothing in everyday life and experience missed his eyes or was foreign to his thought. He had lived with people of every class. He understood their thoughts. He understood their desires. So in his many-faceted mind it seemed that all of life and experience met, and in his words of luminous clarity and photographic vitality it all came forth in its own essential quality.

He came just at the time when men were first using the art of printing for the dissemination of books. Printing produced a new age for technical scholarship. It made it possible for scholars all over the world to be sure that they were using uniform texts. And for the purpose of reaching the general public of educated men it was now possible to send forth thousands of copies of a book, when previously it had been an achievement to have twenty or thirty or forty copies, and these by no means as completely uniform as the author would have desired. No one profited more by the possibilities of the age of printing than did Erasmus. It was an age of great printers, and Erasmus managed his relations with the masters of the presses of many lands with great skill and shrewdness—perhaps sometimes with too great shrewdness. But the fact that he usually kept their friendship seems to show that he conformed fairly well to the loose standards of the time. As his financial situation improved, Erasmus was able to surround himself by able and aspiring young men, proud to do any sort of work from manual labor to secretarial activities and to traveling on his errands, supremely proud to be intimately

connected with the veritable ruler of the intellectual world. Erasmus charmed them by his friendliness, disciplined them by his own acute intelligence, and sent them forth when they really responded to his training, devoted scholars and urbane gentlemen ready to take their places in the intellectual world.

III

We must remember that in his own writing Erasmus had to begin at the very beginning. We find him trying his hand at publishing poetry, that of a friend and his own. He is ready to write polished introductions for the work of better-known men. He is ready to write eulogies of highly placed men, and even his very early writing of this sort is characterized by significant thought as well as by compliment. Fascinated by the pithy sayings to be found in many authors, Erasmus began to make a collection which soon contained thousands of proverbs, quotations from classical writers, every sort of bright and pithy saying, and by and by many a clever and cutting comment from Erasmus' own pen. So the *Adages* began to appear. Year after year they came forth, always enriched by more quotations and more personal observations and criticisms and interpretations.

In Italy, Erasmus found able and learned men who were willing to add to his materials, and he never forgot their friendly helpfulness. At last the *Adages* became a vast repository of classical culture, a sort of anthology of the sharpest insight and the best writing which had come from the Greek and Latin masterpieces. And the personal contributions of Erasmus made the whole a brilliant panorama of the life of the intelligence, and in some sense the practical philosophy of life, of a brilliant gentleman who was a citizen of the whole world.

The *Adages* had a great sale all over Europe. Men read them to secure entrance into a rich world of which they knew all too little. They became a little university for men who wished to be gentlemen in the sense of the revival of learning. Authors small

and great used them. And any man who aspired to have a place in the bright new world was apt to give point to a phrase by a quotation from the *Adages* of Erasmus. In a sense they did represent a synopsis of the best that had been thought and said in the world. But it was all passed through the mind of Erasmus and came forth touched and made human and living by the qualities of his own personality. The reader of the *Adages* did not feel that he was reading a scrapbook of clever quotations. He felt that by the aid of Erasmus he was making his own the very spirit as well as much of the actual material which made up the culture of the world.

The *Adages* went everywhere. They were read by everyone who counted in the intellectual life of the world. And they began to exercise an influence which passed beyond the limits of the purely intellectual. The cutting edge of the irony of Erasmus made some things absurd which it was good to have discredited. In land after land men came to feel not only that they had a new sense of the good life of the mind but that they had come to know Erasmus. His confidence in clear and critical thinking and corrosive criticism began to spread. And so at last Erasmus became a European figure.

IV

From his boyhood Erasmus had been a passionate reader and student of the classics. He seems to have had much time for reading in school and monastery. And so he obtained a happy familiarity with the great Latin writers. They did not represent hard tasks to which he reluctantly devoted himself. They became friends to whom he gave a passionate devotion. As the boy Erasmus read, he came to possess a sense of the possibilities of style, of the fashion in which words and sentences and solid masses of writing could be given vitality and energy and richness and coherence. On he went until he became a great master of Latin style. He learned from those who, like Cicero, had pos-

sessed a singular understanding of the possibilities of Latin prose. But he never became the slave of even the greatest Latin writers of antiquity. As we have seen, he made his own Latin style to answer to the living needs of men of his own age. And a magnificent achievement it was. He always went beyond grammar and rhetoric. He sought the substance back of the form. The wedding of noble form and noble substance was the thing which attracted him. He wrote to a friend: "Before going to bed read something exquisite and worth remembering of which you will be thinking when overcome by sleep, and for which you will ask yourself when you awake." When he began to bring out edition after edition of great Latin writers, it was the very life they reflected which lived again as he introduced these writers to the men of his own day. So the human story of the past met the human story as it was being written in his own century. To the end of his life, whatever his other employments, Erasmus continued this sort of thing. There were editions of Cicero, Quintus Curtius, Horace, Livy, Ovid, Persius, Plautus, works of Pliny, Seneca, Suetonius, Publius Syrus, and Terence.

But Erasmus came to see that Latin was not enough. Greek was the fountainhead. And he could be contented only when he could read the Greek masters in their own tongue. He wrote from Paris: "As soon as I receive any money, I will buy Greek authors and afterward some clothes." It was hard and difficult business, but Erasmus made his way. He was contented with nothing less than genuine capacity and efficiency in the handling of Greek. He made some attempt at Hebrew, but there was no such competent attainment on his part in this field. But Greek answered to his need, and he could not give to it too great a devotion. In due season editions of Greek authors, either in the original or in Latin versions, began to come forth. There were Aesop, Aristotle, Demosthenes, Euripides, Galen, Josephus, Libanius, works of Plutarch, Ptolemy, and Xenophon. Lucian became a great favorite, and profoundly did he influence Eras-

mus. It is not too much to say that you can never understand the great Dutch humanist if you have not followed with delighted mind the gay wit and corrosive irony in the writings of Lucian, which indeed set a pattern of cutting satire to be followed again and again, century after century, by great masters of deadly speech. The editions of Greek authors did for them the same sort of thing which had been done by Erasmus for Latin writers.

And as his introductions and the works themselves were read all about Europe, the Revival of Learning became in a new sense a living experience. There is always a danger that scholarship will become verbal, overtechnical and precious. No man of his age had a keener sense of the rights of adequate scholarship as it was possible to understand it in his time. He wanted correct texts. He wanted clear and dependable and accurate translations. But all this he wanted for the sake of something beyond itself. The living force of ancient cultures became a part of his very life. And it was this which he shared with men of many countries. He came to be regarded as the greatest classical scholar of his time. The patience, the vast industry, the indefatigable toil, and the microscopic care which characterized his work were recognized and understood by men all about the world.

With all his love of good talk and of the social graces, no glittering opportunity with men of the most fascinating intelligence and none of the pomp and circumstance of life with nobles and princes and kings ever diverted him from the great tasks of learning. He became the very incarnation of the most distinguished qualities of the Renaissance. He put new blood into ancient speech. He put new vitality into ancient voices. Old manuscripts rose from the dust of centuries to move into the currents of a life which their authors had never known. And not only the learning but the personality of Erasmus was back of it all. It was ancient human experience which he was bringing to life again. It was as a living human being that he responded to this ancient vitality. It was other human beings who were

made to feel the wonder of this ancient life. In so vital and many-sided a way was he a humanist. And in so compelling a way did he become the prince of the humanists.

V

But Erasmus was not only a humanist. He was a Christian humanist. And we have now to see the fashion in which this deeper understanding became a part of his life and came forth in his writing. We must never forget the influence of the Brethren of the Common Life upon his boyhood. Even when his interests seemed to move far from the realm of religion, deep in his life was something profoundly Christian waiting to come forth and take command of his life. There has been some debate about the influence of Colet, whom he met in England, upon these deeper aspects of his life. We need not doubt that the brilliant young man of the Renaissance, in whom the classical revival seemed to be incarnate, was deeply stirred and profoundly impressed by the able and serious Englishman whom wealth had not turned from the pursuits of learning and high position had not robbed of the deeper Christian purpose. In quite a new sense Erasmus began to realize what scholarship might accomplish if it became Christian. He and Colet became fast friends, and Colet would have claimed him at once for the tasks of Christian scholarship. But Erasmus knew that his apprenticeship was not yet over. He must master Greek. But he had found a new understanding of the meaning of his own life. He had found a central purpose. Everything else which he did was to have a place in a life whose great endeavor was to make learning Christian.

We get some sense of things which were moving deeply in his life from his *Manual of a Christian Knight*. We find here a characteristic criticism of religious forms taking the place of religious substance. We find a tremendous emphasis upon the intelligence which in no way lessens the emphasis on vital piety. Prayer and knowledge are to work together in the life of the Christian knight. The inner is to give force and power to the

outer. The outer is never to take the place of the inner. The warfare and the weapons and the true wisdom of the Christian are discussed. There is many a pithy judgment: "The way to worship the saints is to imitate their virtues." You have the sense of a clear and highly trained mind applying itself to the interests of piety. It is the work of a Renaissance scholar. But it is the work of a man of the Renaissance whose whole attitude had become profoundly Christian. Serious-minded men in many countries felt their minds stirred and their lives deepened as they read it.

The acute mind of Erasmus was all the while finding it necessary to make discriminations within the realm of his loyalties. In classical scholarship he was devoted to learning, but he scorned the decadent scholarship which lost all sense of serious meaning in minute verbal loyalties. In religion he found profounder and even more searching problems. For religion had its scholastic decadence even as did classical scholarship. Erasmus had known more than his share of the overacute, hair-splitting quality of a self-conscious scholastic practice which was carried to lengths of absurdity which he never ceased to hold up to scorn. He professed to have the deepest reverence for that true theology which set forth the commanding and healing truths which were to transform the minds of men. But the theology which lost itself in frivolous and even ridiculous questions seemed to him all too characteristic of the divines of his time. That all his ridicule was directed at something dangerously silly and intellectually inexcusable is surely true.

But from our larger perspective we ought also to say that Erasmus never quite understood the possibilities of a theology which would represent a great organism of truth so set forth that the very qualities of intellectual coherence gave a new moral command and a new spiritual power. A decadent theology had affected his thought of theology itself more than he knew. Had Erasmus studied under one teacher to whom theology was a living passion, whose work was checked and guided by critical

intelligence, who had a rich and constant sense of human values, and whose centrality of thought saved him from petty confusions, one side of his work might have been rather different. He took the great theological truths with a fine and happy simplicity. He did not want to see them confused by petty minds. And then he himself was all the while driven by a sense of immediate and practical problems. All the fashion by which Christianity was professed by those whose lives discredited their profession—and also discredited the thing which they professed—was a constant preoccupation of his mind. He must do something about it. He must say something about it. He must write something about it.

All of this he did, and as a result the Queen of the Sciences did not quite reign in his own mind. But he knew more theology than many students of his life have realized. The central theological affirmations were presupposed in all his thinking and in all his writing. What he called the philosophy of Christ was based upon a sound body of Christian belief. And it was more than Christian ethics. We shall see as we go on that it was the expression of a deep and humble and sincere religious life. And he was quite right in supposing that most Christians must do precisely what he did. They must see the driving force of great Christian truths and must set about putting them in command of their lives. Christian dialectic is not the business of every Christian, and, most of all, it is not the business of every Christian when it has been confused and distorted by a petty preoccupation with unimportant and even bizarre matters.

So it came about that Erasmus turned from decadent thoughts about Christianity to Christianity itself. He was passionately eager to get back to the sources in the Scriptures. He was eager to consult those early fathers who reflected, as he thought, more completely the direct light of the New Testament itself. He wanted the Bible to be subjected to precisely the sort of clear and candid scholarship to which he had been submitting the classics; biblical books which were covered over by the accretions

of an artificial and misleading, indeed a pseudo, learning might be recovered so that they would stand forth with all their original vitality and power.

VI

In respect of the New Testament Erasmus was influenced and inspired by two very different men. All that was deepest in his nature responded to the noble earnestness of Colet. There was something almost prophetic about the mood which he imbibed from Colet as he approached New Testament study. On the other hand, he learned much from so cool and unhesitating a rationalist as Lorenzo Valla, whose *Notes on the New Testament* Erasmus was brave enough to publish. From Valla he learned sound techniques of exegesis, and the sharp clarity with which he asked and answered questions as to the text and its meaning reflects the quality of the mind of Valla. Erasmus first published his Greek Testament in 1516. The great Polyglot New Testament of Cardinal Ximenes which bore the name Complutensian, though in print at this time, was not actually published and made available to the world until two years later. As years went by, Erasmus published other editions with many changes and additions. A Latin translation with an eye to improving the Vulgate was added. And the *Latin Paraphrases* on all the New Testament books except Revelation spoke directly to the mind of the educated reader. The *Notes on the Greek Testament*, though not included as a commentary, really amounted to something not unlike just that. And so the New Testament began to speak once more directly and clearly and simply to the readers, who became aware of the possibility of this direct contact with happy surprise. Of course, compared with the methods of technical appraisal with which we are familiar, the processes used by Erasmus may seem rather naïve. But he was moving along the right lines. And he laid foundations upon which his successors have built more stately edifices of New Testament criticism than he

could have erected. He had before him ten manuscripts about which we know much less than we would like. But his method we can clearly understand and approve. Get the oldest manuscripts you can. Compare the text, using every resource of scholarship available to you. And at least move in the direction of the construction of a *textus receptus* which shall be as near to the original as is possible.

But it was the special interest of Erasmus to show forth the very essence of the New Testament in such a fashion as to speak directly to the reader who came to these writings centuries after they were composed. He was anxious to make the New Testament speak to women as well as to men. He wanted the husbandman to turn its words into a plough song. He wanted the weaver to hear them hum with the movement of his shuttle. He wanted the traveler to fill his mind with them so that, although his journey had become wearisome, his thoughts could be full of a fresh adventure with great ideas and great truths. In short, he wanted to make the New Testament clearly and directly understood, a part of the very life of everyday men. The preface to the first edition is full of a sense of the greatness of the task Erasmus had set for himself. He wishes that he possessed more eloquence than Cicero in order to describe aright what it is that sound scholarship attempts when it turns its efforts to the New Testament. No philosophy is so important as the philosophy of Christ. So this is the greatest of all tasks. With cutting irony Erasmus repudiates the idea that the safety of the Christian religion lies in the fact that it is not understood. He would have the New Testament made available in a fashion within their understanding to all people—pagan as well as Christian.

In all this we see the deep sense of the value of every human life, of every race, and of every culture, which is so characteristic of Erasmus. The humanist in him filled him with interest in every human being. It was not at all that these men and women whom he so greatly valued could get along without God. It was precisely because they so sorely needed God that they must all

be made aware of what God had done for them in Jesus Christ. God had indeed made man for himself. God and man belonged together. When they were apart, they must be reunited. And this was just what God had set about doing—indeed had done—in Jesus Christ. The true believer in men could have genuine hope for them only as they found and realized the true meaning of their lives in Jesus Christ. So it was only by being a Christian humanist that Erasmus could retain his faith in humanity. The New Testament contained the secret of a good future for man in spite of all the moral and spiritual tragedy of the world. So the New Testament belonged to every man, and to every man it must be brought.

Colet was anxious to have Erasmus follow his editorial treatment of the New Testament books by a full-dress commentary. Something of this character was actually achieved by the *Paraphrases*. It is significant that the treatment of the four Gospels came forth inscribed to four monarchs. Matthew was inscribed to Charles V, Mark to Francis I, Luke to Henry VIII, and John to Ferdinand of Austria, later to become Emperor. It is said that when the *Paraphrases* were translated into English, every parish church in England was furnished with a copy. Edward VI ordered that every parson below the rank of B.D. should provide himself with a copy. Even under Elizabeth the policy of keeping the *Paraphrases* within reach of the people was continued.

In the *Paraphrases* once and again Erasmus is clearing away all the irrelevant and luxurious growths which hid the New Testament from the reader. The very language was to become such that it could be easily and clearly understood. But the extended comments made up something little less than a Christian philosophy of life. Contemporary problems were discussed. The Paraphrase of Mark has an introductory letter on the wickedness of war. It is contemporary follies and sins and wickednesses and contemporary possibilities in the practice of very concrete virtues and good principles which Erasmus keeps before the mind of the reader. The very great success of the *Paraphrases* is seen

from the fact that certain anxious men began to insist that the *Paraphrases* must never be allowed to take the place of the New Testament books themselves. Actually it was their very achievement to bring the New Testament into the lives of men who had never before considered such a thing possible. So the process by which the New Testament was made popular in the best sense was based upon the very soundest scholarship of which the age was capable. If we can imagine a great contemporary journalist basing every interpretation upon the widest and the deepest erudition and the most searching scholarship, we will begin to understand the power of Erasmus.

VII

Turning from the subtleties of what he felt to be the pseudo learning of many men of his own time, Erasmus found refreshment and inspiration in the writings of the great doctors of the early church. At one time or another he published, in whole or in part, works of Algerus, Ambrose, Arnobius, Augustine, Cyprian, Eucherius, Hilarius, Lactantius, and Prudentius among the men who wrote in Latin. He did not neglect Athanasius among the Greek fathers. And he brought forth editions of Latin translations of Basil, Irenaeus, Chrysostom, Nazienzen, and Origen among the Greeks. He wrote of all these men with a skill and a discrimination which came as a matter of surprise to his readers. He brought to educated readers a new sense of the treasures which they possessed in the classical texts that had come out of the life of the church itself.

The Christian writer for whom Erasmus cared the most was Jerome. Indeed, in certain ways the two men greatly resembled each other. As Erasmus remembered the lonely hermit busy about the tasks of scholarship and translation, eagerly loving the classics, with nerves veritably tingling with response to the throbbing currents of life, writing words and sentences so vital that at times they almost seemed to leap from the page, caring for the Christian life much more than he cared for men's formal

and often oversubtle ways of setting forth its meaning and implications, he saw a brother of his own mind and heart at work in the midst of the experiences and the ways of another century. He spoke of the incredible ardor with which his mind burned as he worked at writings of Jerome.

These fathers, Latin and Greek, became new persons when subjected to the quality of Erasmus' mind. And as he wrote of them, they came to something like a literary resurrection. When Erasmus set about analysis based upon his own honest attempt to attain really sound scholarship, with his massive and many-sided erudition always so completely at his command, everything which he touched was vitalized. Too often other men turned to the tasks of scholarship and learning from what they felt to be more engrossing occupations. But Erasmus actually lived in these things. Such studies won his completest devotion. And his heart never beat with such eager and almost tempestuous zest as when he meditated about and then gave himself completely to the task of making learning Christian.

VIII

Erasmus had a very definite relation to the political life of his time. From the time when he became privy councilor to Charles he seems to have taken more seriously the responsibility of writing about these matters. In 1516 he published the *Institution of a Christian Prince*, which was inspired by his relation to Charles, then king of Spain and later to become the Emperor Charles V. One can best approach this study of the education of a Christian ruler if one keeps in mind Machiavelli's *Prince*, which, although not published until 1532, had probably been written by the time Erasmus published his discussion. Machiavelli refused to bind the prince by any moral considerations whatever. To Erasmus, as to his great classical predecessors, politics was a branch of ethics. The acceptance of the principles of Machiavelli would completely disintegrate the moral life of the prince. And people governed by such a prince would find their own character in-

evitably suffering. There is a kind of malignant evil about the position of Machiavelli which has had its own share in poisoning the political life of Europe. Erasmus, happily and with the most complete and sincere conviction, writes from within the tradition of Christian faith and morals. His fundamental position is that the prince exists for the good of the people. If he finds himself utterly unable to achieve what is good for them, he ought to lay down his crown. The people must be ruled over in such a fashion as to win their willing consent to the activities of the ruler. His power comes from them, and if he misuses that power they have a right to take it from him. So monarchy, good as it is, must be held steady by certain checks. The prince must be educated as one who is to bear responsibilities requiring character and intelligence. If he is surrounded by flatterers in his youth, he will be quite unfitted for the responsibilities which he is to discharge. On the other hand, if he is honestly and properly trained, he will prefer to be a just man rather than an unjust prince. The prince will be taught early to know the Scriptures. He will model his rule upon the teachings of Christ. He will read classical history, which he will always judge by Christian standards. He will read Plutarch and Seneca. He will read Aristotle and Cicero. And, very especially, he will read Plato.

The prince will never forget that he is the servant of his people and that they are free men. For the sake of their good he will be ready to endure such austerities that without exaggeration he may be said to take up his cross. He must learn to know his own people, and it will be best if he is really one of them. It is significant that Erasmus, of all people, advised the prince not to become so much a man of the whole world by extraneous relationships and travel that he is incapable of being a good ruler of his own people. He is to avoid the kind of entanglements which are likely to lead to war. Erasmus' own hatred of unethical wars comes out clearly and sharply. Remembering the ugly and ruinous wars which he knew so well, he is almost ready to take the position that the most unjust peace is better than the most

just war. Of course he finds ways, as he goes on thinking and writing, to modify this extreme position. He comes to recognize inevitably that if the very life of a country is at stake, it must defend itself. But his hatred of war becomes one of the veritable passions of his life.

Law must be based upon equity. And the good law is alive in a good prince. Penal laws must be such as to deter men from crime. But the wise prince will probe more deeply and seek to understand and remove, as far as is possible, the very causes of crime. The power of taxation is not to be misused. Luxuries and not necessities are to be considered when taxes are being assessed. Common people are to be saved from carrying too heavy burdens. Public money is to be spent for really productive purposes. Schools and universities must be supported in order to achieve and maintain a high level of intelligence and moral understanding. And Erasmus very earnestly suggests the resort to arbitration when international difficulties arise.

But the center of everything is the character of the prince. He is not to regard his position as one which allows him to arrange his life for his personal enjoyment. He is to be a father to his people. And his personal enjoyment is to be found in those actions which further their good. Because he is a Christian prince, the ruler has motives and standards which, if they are taken seriously, will lift his life and the life of the state to new levels.

If we should ask, And who was Erasmus that he should write thus for the guidance of princes? the answer is not too far to seek. He was more than a classical scholar, though that was a part of his equipment for writing about politics. He was more than a learned student of the Bible, and especially of the New Testament, though that too helped him to meet political problems with a new and lofty orientation. He had long left a provincial life behind him. He had traveled all about his world. He knew princes and magistrates and peasants. His shrewd eyes had missed nothing. And it was of the very nature of his mind

to turn learning to the purposes of the ongoing of life. So living at Basle at the very height of his power, he turned the moment of his political recognition as a privy councilor to the purposes of writing, which did carry its word afar but which, if taken with complete seriousness, might have saved Europe from dark and devastating experiences.

IX

A golden hour came when it seemed that the reigning pope and a number of the greatest rulers of Western nations were inclined to peace, and might be influenced by the distinguished scholar and thinker and man of letters who had so captured the mind and the imagination of Europe. It was then that Erasmus wrote the *Complaint of Peace*. It was written at white heat of intensity. Erasmus put into it all the passion of his hatred of war. With amazing skill he assembled arguments from every direction. All his gifts of cutting satire and all his capacity for the pillorying of inconsistency and all the driving energy produced by a great hope were brought into play. For once Erasmus seems a little less than the poised and urbane humanist seeing every side of the question he is discussing. He seems to have become the passionate prophet of a particular cause. It is not surprising that hot and morally impetuous men who have made peace an absolute have been ready a little too easily to claim Erasmus as an ally in their masterful contention. But, as we shall see, Erasmus did not cease to be a humanist when he became an advocate of peace. When his gift for vivid and explosive expression seems to have carried him away, he carefully qualifies what he has said. He sees clearly enough that if everything which makes life worth living is attacked, it must be defended even at the point of the sword. He sees also that a nation may be right and its foe may be wrong without the existence of a situation sinister enough to justify a war. It is selfish and unethical and aggressive war which he is attacking. And against this poisonous activity he uses every weapon at his disposal.

In this brilliant piece of writing Peace herself is supposed to be speaking. And so once more Erasmus exercises his fine gift of making every argument very human, very vivid, and full of the quality of personal experience. Peace looks out upon a world where she is universally praised and as universally ignored. Indeed, the case is even worse than this: she is violated by those who by every principle of reason and religion ought to be her constant and faithful supporters. By a curious and effective turn of argument Peace contrasts men with beasts. The wildest beasts live at peace with their own kind. Lions do not fight lions. Boars do not fight boars. Even wolves so manage concord among themselves that the situation has been turned into proverbs. Only men turn against their own kind in destructive hostility. Nature has given armor to beasts in order that they may defend themselves against other beasts which would destroy them. Only man is born unarmed, and he has invented weapons more deadly than any which the wildest beasts could ever use. Man is actually made for mutual love and amity. Yet men turn against their own natures in terrible mutual hostility. Even when men seem to meet in happy friendliness, under the surface there is suspicion and dread and dark hostility. There seems to be no place for Peace to sit among these contentious men. Princes are rather men of might than men of good judgment; and when Peace turns to men of erudition, a mental fight is going on all the while. The leaders of religion are leaders in contention. The great religious orders committed to the pursuit of some sort of perfection are the centers of deadly strife. And when Peace turns to individual men, each man is living a life which is a sort of perpetual civil war. To Peace it is a marvel that such men dare to call themselves Christians. Peace now conducts a long biblical argument, reaching the conclusion that the great words of the Old and New Testaments are about peace while the vital and revealing words of men are about war. The great Christian sacraments are sacraments of peace, but men turn from them to thoughts and acts of war. Peace turns from

the long and bitter history of wars to the wars which have disgraced Christendom during the last ten years. Christians who are members of one body turn against each other in acts of deadly destruction. The great ecclesiastical leaders support wars whose basis will not stand honest or ethical inspection. How do the mitre and helmets agree? Peace in a brilliant side argument full of deadly irony goes over the Lord's Prayer, which lawless soldiers and those who are planning lawless wars dare to turn to their own purposes. Peace confesses that there are times when war cannot be avoided. Then let it so be conducted that its evils fall upon those who are responsible for it. It is the brutal wars of Christian against Christian which rouse the deadly indignation of Peace. Very clearly she declares that she is not condemning those who repel the violent incursions of the barbarians, at their own peril defending the common tranquility. Contentions about marriages and matters of succession among Christian princes and national jealousies and misunderstandings are never a sound basis for war. This world is the common land of all men. Great questions must be decided in the light of the common good. The money spent in destroying a city might build a noble town. The money wasted in aggressive war might nobly enrich the country and the world. It is a good thing sometimes to buy peace. It is a tragic thing to remember that Christian men have invented the most deadly instruments of war. Men are urged to develop a will for peace. Peace in a series of powerful sentences directly addresses those who could further the cause of concord. The princes, the priests, the divines, the bishops, the magistrates, and all who bear the Christian name are summoned in ringing words to take up the cause of Peace and do all that they can do to further it. Let princes reign by laws rather than by arms. In this fashion that great good which can be won only through peace may be brought to the world.

It was not long until Erasmus learned that his high hopes were not destined to come to fruition. But when war was unleashed and flourished madly, the stern and passionate words

of the *Complaint of Peace* remained to speak to the consciences of men.

X

When he was crossing the Alps on his return from Italy, Erasmus was musing of many things. He had read Sebastian Brant's *Ship of Fools*, where 112 different kinds of fools appeared. He began to think about writing a satire regarding folly. As he continued his journey, he passed the slow hours developing the suggested thought into a plan.

When he reached England and the home of Thomas More, he was laid up with lumbago, and in a week he wrote out his *Praise of Folly*. The title was a play on the name of More—the man so wise and so far from folly, the name so easily connected with folly itself. In a sense the really wonderful friendship between More and Erasmus had something to do with the book. The delightful and merry play of More's mind had completely fascinated Erasmus. And some of that mood of merry wit got into the *Praise of Folly*.

But Lucian, the old friend of Erasmus, had more to do with the mood in which the book was written than anyone else. In a sense the *Praise of Folly* represents a Christian Lucian addressing himself to the vices and evils of his time. The book is written with exquisite classical urbanity and finesse. The very methods castigated are used with delicious irony in the construction of the argument. Folly herself, clad in academic fashion and wearing a head covering which suggests that it is hiding the ears of an ass (academic gown and cap and bells), utters her own eulogy. If no one else will praise her, she will praise herself. In Folly, Erasmus has created with masterful skill a very subtle and amazingly interesting character. He lets the lights fall in various ways, shifts the emphasis, and changes the mood, so that sometimes she is crass and naïvely sensual, and then she becomes capable of insights which almost make Folly seem wiser than Wisdom. In a way Erasmus, writing of trifles

without being a trifler, is gaily and skillfully using Folly for a purpose: to make a study, often full of the bravest irony, sometimes a bit admiring in spite of himself, of those elements in thought and life which do not have to do with the classical use of reason. Sometimes he is saying, Life is incredibly and brutally silly unless it is guided by reason. Sometimes he is saying, There are aspects in life which are beyond logic and, in a sense, beyond the processes of reason. This double attitude gives him great range. It also enables him to hide behind the flashing and quick-turning movement of his thought. It was an age when it was very dangerous to be as frank as Erasmus intended to be. There were men who burst into print, following his logic to too frank an expression, who came upon a violent death.

In a sense, like Plato's *Symposium*, the discussion begins at a very low level and rises to a higher. For Folly was born out of wedlock, and her nurses were Drunkenness and Ignorance. Yet she furnishes the sap without which life would never rise in the tree. Life indeed would become intolerable without a constant admixture of folly. Who would dare to marry if Folly did not fill wedlock with thoughts of bright illusion? The cool and hard calculation of the intelligent would bring the human adventure to a standstill. The mellow and gay inconsequence of Folly makes life tolerable. In fact, men of every class really live by folly rather than by wisdom. What could be more foolish than the involved processes of learned thinkers and theologians? What could be more foolish than the techniques of the interpreters of the Bible? Folly turns scholar and thinker to illustrate these things. What could be more foolish than the ways of the monks and the luxurious selfishness of the princes of religion? But if the bright lawlessness of Folly can encourage men in ways of indulgence, the living experience which moves to the heart of the meaning of life regardless of the ways of formal logic has its own great strength. So Folly begins subtly to change, and, to the surprise of the reader, words of ripe understand-

ing about life and religion sometimes fall from her lips. The higher Folly, who moved beyond hard and selfish wisdom, has words to speak which sound strangely like the words of the Christian religion itself. Then the cap and bell move again. And Folly does not attempt to summarize her argument because she cannot remember what she has said.

So Erasmus has written in such a fashion that his earnestness can hide behind his gay wit, and the nimble feet of his quick intelligence enable him to strike many a blow and suddenly to be somewhere else when men try to catch him.

More was just the man to understand the quick and merciless play of the wit of Erasmus and the deep earnestness under it. He and his companions shook their sides with mirth, enjoying a strange, deep moral and spiritual satisfaction under the laughter. And when once the book was published, this is just what happened all over Europe. It put the world-wide reputation of Erasmus upon a new foundation. It made for him endless friends among men of good will. And it planted the seeds of a permanent hatred in those whose vices he had castigated.

XI

The familiar *Colloquies* of Erasmus were first issued as a kind of textbook for students of Latin. They grew and grew, and altogether were something like forty years in the making. They were probably the most widely read writings of the century, for eminent writers in every direction borrowed from them. Shakespeare, Montaigne, and Cervantes may be mentioned among these borrowers. And—almost in our own time—Rostand certainly found the nose of Cyrano in the nose of Cocles in one of the colloquies. The dialogue form of the colloquies gave them a quick give and take and all the vividness of living conversation. Virtually every experience of Erasmus in travel, in contact with other minds, and in all the long adventures of his own intelligence seemed to find a place in these remarkable writings. There is an amazingly effective description of a ship-

wreck; there is a pilgrimage to a great shrine, with ironic observations of startling effectiveness; there are photographic descriptions of the various types of charlatans who formed so familiar a part of the life of the time. The reader stops at the inns of the period and fairly touches the bodies of his fellow travelers and inhales the odors of these hostels, while their very food seems to be set before him. Human experiences like marriage come in for a discussion which is a description of the habits of life in that time. The all-too-easy taking of vows which cannot be revoked and which commit one for life to a house of religion comes in for a portrayal which is, in fact, an acute criticism. There is many a frank discussion of the ways of those who find various vices alluring, though in all this Erasmus remains on the side of the angels. The author knows all about the temptations which assail men. He never treats them with stiff hardness. But he manages to be human and kindly without allowing his moral judgment to be confused. There are banquets of various kinds with no end of conversations full of banter and wit and irony and charm. So sharp is the implied condemnation of religious abuses, so biting the irony when the profession and the living of men of religion are contrasted, that one is not entirely surprised to find that the time comes when the book is put in the Index. But it had found a place in the mind of Europe before an attempt was made to banish it from that very mind. The problems of women are discussed with much sympathy, and women are treated with a certain gentle and friendly understanding. You move through crowds of men and women. You see them collectively. You see them individually. And many a figure was so sharply etched that it became a part of the human understanding of Europe.

The simple and deep and honest religious life of Erasmus comes out clearly and happily in that noble colloquy "The Religious Banquet." And the great Christian beliefs by which his own spirit was nourished were expressed in the colloquy "Concerning Faith." A good deal has been written about Erasmus

which completely missed the real quality of his life, and which could not have been written had the authors known and understood the meaning of these two colloquies. Men were fascinated as they read after a scholar who knew so much about life and who had thought so deeply and so wisely. They found something not unlike enchantment in the graces of his style, in its reflection of the constant eagerness of his mind, and in the human sympathy which lay back of the understanding of the scholar. They knew to the full the happiness of the mirth of the mind. But it was always a mirth which left behind it something solid and true and withal an added appreciation of the fine quality which could be given to life. It was as if every reader was welcomed to the intimate friendship of Erasmus. The flash of his eye, the lightning of his mind, the assured movement of his critical intelligence, and a certain gracious urbanity which belonged to Erasmus were all shared with the reader. One realizes that in the days of novel writing Erasmus could have written great novels of manners and novels full of the profound study of character. With all his wit and his love of nonsense, with all his understanding of the subtle richness of the Renaissance, Erasmus never lost the sharpness of his moral insight; and he put full vigor into the expression of his great convictions about the moral and spiritual meaning of life. He had many an intimate among the pagan minds of the Renaissance. But he never became a pagan. In the *Colloquies*, as indeed in all of his writings, Erasmus is busy about the great task of setting forth a Christian criticism of life. And because he achieved this purpose in vital and commanding fashion, his writings entered into the very structure of the life of his age.

XII

Erasmus, like Cicero, was a great letter writer. Sometimes he actually wrote forty letters a day. They were written to emperors and popes and kings and princes and cardinals, to scholars and printers, to men all over Europe who cared about

learning. And very especially they were written to men who shared his own desire to make learning Christian and to fill Christian thought and writing with the acuteness, the spirit of gracious understanding, and the graces of style which characterized the best classical writing. The political, religious, and intellectual leaders of the age were his friends. To them he wrote letters which come to us as priceless treasures. It has been said that he was more frank and daring in his conversation than in his writing. And it has been said that there is also more frankness and daring in his letters than in his more formal works. It was a difficult and dangerous age, and he often corrected and changed his letters before they were published to avoid those indiscretions about which he was anxious. But actually the discretion of Erasmus would have been great courage in most other men. He was not the sort of man to hide his convictions, and they came out in his formal writings as well as in his letters and his talk. His overmodest way of referring to his own carefulness to avoid giving offence has been taken too seriously by many men who have written about him. Usually when he was writing about being timid he was actually doing something which was very brave. He had no desire to pose as a hero. He wanted to do the work of a quiet scholar and thinker. But the results of these activities had to be set forth honestly, let the cost be what it might. It goes without saying that the letters were gracious and skillful, that they were warm and human, that they were full of the quick turns of the playful intelligence of Erasmus. Men kept them proudly, and counted them as literary treasures. And they have come to stand among the most important source materials for the life of that time. Erasmus could not be everywhere at the same time, but he could write everywhere. And in a sense his letters are a living conversation with Europe. They supplement his more formal writings, and they help us to watch the actual movement of his mind.

Some men write to hide their thoughts. Some men write

to hide their lack of thought. Erasmus, whose mind was fairly bursting with ideas, liked nothing better than to pour them out to his friends. And did ever a man have such friends to whom to write? One can fancy the zest with which Sir Thomas More, who called Erasmus his best friend, would open one of his letters. And one can understand the happiness with which John Colet received one of his letters. But he managed to keep the easiest and most friendly relations with the very highest ecclesiastics. And in the midst of these warm and gracious letters to the great men of the church there flash out the antiseptic truths Erasmus was so eager to bring to their minds. Actually the greatest political and religious leaders believed in him and were willing to hear from him words which they would accept from no one else. He had time for simple people who, without intellectual influence or social distinction, cared for his writings and his ideas, and he could write to them with a warmth and understanding still most attractive to the reader of his epistles.

Actually Erasmus was all the while busy creating a new mind in Europe. It was all done with a kind of gay confidence which may lead one to underestimate the greatness of the task and the superlative quality of the achievement. To turn all Europe into a friendly fireside was something no one had ever done before. Men came to a new understanding of one another because of their common understanding of Erasmus. He was thinking of the cultivated intelligence of Europe. Right royally he reigned. And his letters were touched with the qualities of this kingliness as well as by the warmth of his friendliness.

XIII

Something must, of course, be said of the relations of Erasmus and Luther. Sir William Robertson Nicoll once said: "No doubt Carlyle was a proud and scornful peasant of genius." The words fit Luther even more than they fitted Carlyle. And they must be kept in our minds as we conduct this discussion. Luther was a very great man—so great that his weaknesses and

limitations were more influential and more dangerous than those of smaller men. It is right that we should think most of his greatness, of his monumental sincerity, of the utter passion of self-giving with which he put himself into the cause which he made his own, of that deep experience of triumphant trust in Christ which speaks so deeply to the heart of every evangelical Christian, of the fashion in which he taught the Bible to speak German and almost singlehandedly created the German nation, of the lonely fashion in which he withstood forces which it seemed would inevitably crush him—and how he eventually emerged triumphant. One is almost breathless as he thinks of the things which can be said in praise of Luther.

But this is not the whole story, and we must be completely honest in telling the tale of his relations with Erasmus. The two men never met. At first Luther wrote to Erasmus as a young scholar might write to a master—with gratitude and appreciation and a desire for help. When the Greek New Testament came out, he was ready to make it an important source for his lectures, though he read parts with uneasiness and mental reservations. Erasmus had attacked the abuses which he hated. It seemed to him that the two were destined to be partners in a great enterprise. And indeed, Erasmus was on the same side in all matters of reform. He did more to protect Luther than many people have understood. And as I have said, it is true that his quiet and carefully considered support saved the life of the German reformer. Indeed, while it was a matter of reformation, the two could work together in many matters. But when it came to revolution, there was an inevitable parting of the ways. Erasmus wanted the old church to be made worthy of the gospel. He was utterly unwilling to break away from it and to help to form a new church. Religious revolution seemed to him to involve religious anarchy, and this in turn seemed to promise political anarchy. The terrible excesses of the Peasants' War seemed to confirm this position.

The whole situation was made more difficult because of the

temperament of the two men. Erasmus was a precise and urbane scholar, disliking overstatement as he might have fled from a plague. Luther thrived on overemphasis. His utterly unchecked and brutal energy of language fills one with wonder today. As he came to be hostile to Erasmus, his uncontrolled vehemence of vitriolic condemnation passed all bounds. Erasmus believed in the power of shafts of wit to bring down strongholds. He believed in the bright power of sweet reasonableness to enlighten the dark minds of men. To Luther the life of the individual was cataclysmic. And the life of the church and the world was bound to be cataclysmic too. He was like a war god presiding in a storm. To Erasmus the external mastery of unconvinced minds was anathema. Though he always did what he could—and it was much—to protect Luther, and though he knew and said that his enemies must not be allowed to overwhelm him, Erasmus came to regard the German reformer as a prophet of disintegration. To Luther it seemed that Erasmus had put his hand to the plow and then had drawn back. It seemed that he had betrayed the greatest cause in the world. So he was ready to exhaust the vocabulary of vituperation when he spoke and wrote of him.

I have not quoted any of the sentences which illustrated the brutal vulgarity of his speech. I prefer to leave him to his own greatness and to return to the lonely figure of Erasmus, who went his own brave way. The church offered him the highest honors. But he would not become a slave of the church. The reformers would have given him something little short of worship if he had surrendered the integrity of his mind to follow them. But he would no more be the slave of reform than of reaction. From the first, Erasmus had believed in reform rather than in revolution. And he was consistent to the end. It is not fair to say that Erasmus was not an evangelical. He said very plainly that in God is all our hope, and that he bestows everything on us through his Son Jesus. He declared without hesitation that by the death of Christ we are redeemed. And he did

not hesitate to say that we are not to take any merit to ourselves but are to ascribe all good things to God. And when we read the simple and appealing words in which he reveals his own spiritual life, we see how deeply these things had entered not only into his mind but into his experience. Erasmus was an evangelical. But Luther was a cataclysmic evangelical.

The friends of Erasmus in the old church were all the while urging him to write against Luther. Men in the highest ecclesiastical position and men whom he personally trusted united to make this plea. Of one thing Erasmus was certain. He would not attack Luther in any way which would question the validity or the value of his work as a reformer. As he brooded over the matter, he came to see that the real difference between his own position and that of Luther reached a clear and definite point in the matter of human freedom. Luther spoke to the very heart of the Christian when he spoke of justification by faith. But when he tried to put it all into an intellectual frame, he was so afraid that he would be ministering to human pride if he admitted that man possessed freedom to accept the offered grace of God in Christ that he denied human freedom definitively and made the very act of accepting the divine grace the result of the act of God. This meant, if one followed it through, the emasculation of the very precious doctrine of justification by faith. And Erasmus saw that this would never do. So he wrote and published the *Discussion of Free Will*.

Dr. Preserved Smith has commented on the brevity, the moderation, and the wit which characterize this work. It is still readable, he says, and he rather wryly indicates that not too many such books are. The difficulties of the subject are admitted by Erasmus. But he puts the whole case upon two arguments. Unless man's will is free, to ask him to repent is a bit of meaningless jargon; and to punish him for committing sins which he cannot help committing is the very essence of injustice. Then, turning to the Scriptures, Erasmus rests his case upon those manifold passages which declare or in which it is implied

that man is free to make the great choice and that he stands responsible to God, who all the while desires his conversion rather than his loss of all the good God has in store for those who accept his grace. After the publication of this book the contention goes on with vigor and vituperation.

But Erasmus has taken his position for a belief in that free man who can accept or reject the offered forgiveness and power of God. And Luther is left in a state of moral confusion from which neither he nor his successors have ever been able successfully to emerge. For Luther never gets very far in practical matters without having to deny in effect what he has affirmed theoretically. And Erasmus has merely affirmed theoretically what his Christian ethic demands for the honest ongoing of life.

XIV

In all that I have said, it is clear that Erasmus was at heart a teacher. And indeed, he will live as one of the great educators of the world. He did not hesitate to express his convictions as to the qualifications of a teacher. When he was helping Colet in the matter of the Saint Paul's School, he wrote: "In order that the teacher might be thoroughly up to his work, he should not merely be the master of one particular branch of study. He should himself have traveled through the whole circle of knowledge. . . . I want the teacher to have traversed the whole range of knowledge."

Here we have that idea of comprehensive scholarship which is so essential if a man is to bring adequate comprehension to particular problems. Erasmus would have been very scornful of the type of specialist who knows more and more of less and less. But he never made his large and ample interests a substitute for the demand for complete competence and mastery in a particular field. And here we have the idea of a corpus of knowledge which must be in the mind of a man who is to do good work. Education must have substance as well as technique. Erasmus would have been ready to unleash all the powers of his

wit at the expense of the type of education which exercises endless ingenuity, developing a technique without ever coming to grips with the body of material, without which technical skills lead only to futility and folly. The best that had been thought and done and said and written in the world was to be sought out and made the good heritage of men through the processes of disciplined and informed education. And the tale of that which was not noble and of good report was to be the subject of the analytical irony of the thoroughly equipped and richly furnished mind of the man who had earned the right to be an educator.

Erasmus believed with all his heart in substituting Peter well-informed for Peter ill-informed. He believed that the processes of education would make absurd many superstitions and overthrow many evils. In all this he was, up to a point, quite right. There were depths of evil in the lives of men who deliberately made evil their good which he did not touch and which his brilliant processes of education would not reach. But even here his doctrine of the free man accepting or betraying the good gives us the clue.

Erasmus believed that man's reason was made for the finding and the comprehension of truth. He knew that there were limits to the powers of man's mind. He knew that man could misuse his reason. He knew that he could make it the instrument for self-betrayal. But he believed that man's reason was made for good and noble enterprises. And this was a part of his belief that life was given by God to man for good and noble uses. It was because he believed so deeply in the pivotal significance of human experience and in its good possibilities that he was ready to find the center of religion in a great Person. To him the center of Christian experience was the meeting of Christ. Truths and principles found their defining importance for him just at the point where they met and influenced the lives of persons. To get away from abstractions to concrete experience was his constant endeavor. It is sometimes said that he was not a

theologian. In any event, he had a sure grasp and complete control of that nexus of truth with personal experience, without which theology and philosophy are doomed to come upon frustration and defeat.

So he made the intellectual life human. And so he saw life and religion through the eyes of human experience. He readily accepted revelation. He quite simply believed in God's acts for men as the basis of all human hope. The basis of all his thought was found in the God who speaks to us and has wrought for us in Jesus Christ. He truly believed that the thoughts of God were broader than many men's minds. There was room in God's will for the appropriation by man of every good thing which had come through the great and commanding achievement of Greece and Rome. That heritage was to be inspected by eyes which had seen the Christ and eyes which had seen the cross. And only that was to be retained which could meet the judgment of Christ. So it was that Erasmus, the prince of the humanists, made humanism Christian.

Irving Babbitt

OVER FOUR HUNDRED YEARS have passed since the death of Erasmus. We live in a world which is different enough in many ways from the world which he knew. The Protestant revolt achieved a success which he did not foresee. So the religious unity of Europe was broken. On the one side was freedom with a loss of solidarity. On the other there was solidarity with constant danger of grave loss of freedom. On the political side nationalistic movements and achievements almost buried the hope, and even the dream, of a unified world state. Dante's *De Monarchia* became the account of a memory and an old ideal rather than the description of a situation which had any sort of actuality or sound expectation of future realization. The growth of the democratic ideal and its increasing practice led to further breaking away from the ideal of unity. Parliamentary forms of government multiplied and were given an increasingly democratic form.

Changes came, not without explosion and wild alarm. The French Revolution saw the end of one era and the beginning of another. The American Republic achieved separate existence at the point of the sword. Parliamentary government advanced on the whole in more orderly and peaceful form in Britain, and at last the British Empire came to be something it was possible to describe as an imperial democracy. The intellectual world suffered many vicissitudes. From the time of Abelard's *Sic et Non* its unity had been threatened. Thomas Aquinas made a brave attempt to assert this unity on a wide front in the *Summa*.

Indeed the thirteenth century seemed to become a time of the triumphant expression of unity. But even before the Protestant revolt this unity was threatened on the intellectual side. And the new political world made easier in a sense a disintegration of the old intellectual unity. The growth of literary analysis and the candid facing of all the facts which were unearthed regarding ancient documents easily furthered a growth of skepticism regarding many long-held positions. And when criticism took up the study of the documents of the Old and New Testaments, the process moved even more rapidly. As the intellectual life became more and more secular over wide areas, the study of the physical world and all its forces constantly grew to be a great and masterful movement. The triumphs in the control of nature for human purposes became so great as completely to fascinate the minds and the imagination of men. Science became not only a body of almost miraculous practical achievement but also a philosophy of life and existence. And on one great and masterful side of its development this philosophy became increasingly materialistic and mathematical.

In another way there were vast movements among the inarticulate masses of men. There arose an insistence that democracy should have industrial as well as political effects. The wrongs of the underprivileged were faced and analyzed in quite a new fashion. The uprising of labor became one of the most impressive and masterful facts in the whole life of mankind. At the extreme left it became an illogical combination of social idealism with a materialistic philosophy. As illogical as the combination was intellectually, it became increasingly powerful practically.

So in the midst of disturbing tensions and confusing demands for change the American Republic came into existence and grew more and more powerful. The battle between stability and disintegration was signalized in its own life by the War Between the States, in which the integrity and the coherence of the national life were maintained. In the same general period the insistent demand for unity led to the unification of Italy under

the leadership of Cavour and the unification of Germany under Bismarck. The amazing material resources of the United States were utilized, not to say exploited, by such skillful organization and action as were beheld with astonishment and something less than happy approval by the outside world. The passion for a democratic diffusion of knowledge led to a unique development of popular education in the United States. Just when the intellectual life was losing its unity, there was secured for it a popular distribution which brought it within the reach of practically every child in the American Republic.

We are now to raise the question as to the fate of the forces of humanism in this confused and rapidly changing world. And especially we want to investigate its fortunes in the American Republic. America had been discovered almost as a part of the new spirit created by the Renaissance. It was explored and grew while the Protestant revolt was sweeping over Europe. The Deistic movement, with its belief in an absent God and a self-sufficient man, had become an important movement by the time of the formation of the American Republic and had an important share in making the mind of some of its founders. Broadly speaking, however, the intellectual life of early America had a religious and even a theological foundation. Colleges existed for the training of ministers, and they became the leaders of the community. The invasion of the new criticism and the inauguration of the reign of materialistic science led to a period of conflict. There were those who called anything false which seemed to threaten their historic faith. There were those who surrendered almost without a fight to the new positions, who came to believe that critical study of the historic documents and the positions of science sounded the knell of the Christian faith in the form in which it had held sway in the world. There were those who came to believe with increasing confidence that a critical study of the new movements united with a critical study of the Christian religion would lead to the eventual triumph of the ancient faith. There were those

who were ready to meet the representatives of a materialistic science at a peace table where they would offer a Christianity emasculated to fit the desires of the advocates of the new critical and scientific positions. Large numbers of intellectual leaders in New England came to feel that the new knowledge had made the old faith impossible.

In the meantime there had been a good deal of the old humanism in spirit and, in a measure, in practice maintained in American life. Education was securely based upon a study of Greek and Latin. The ideals of the humanistic scholar were widely held. In James Russell Lowell the spirit of humanism as it was then understood became commanding, if not entirely dominant, in American thought. In Ralph Waldo Emerson there was an odd combination of humanistic insights with positions which came from more expansive and diffusive forms of thought. All sorts of materials had been put into the caldron, and its contents were rapidly coming to a boiling point. As it turned out, the classical form of humanism was clarified and set forth with commanding erudition in the United States by Irving Babbitt and by Paul Elmer More.

I

In America the year 1865 saw the victory of the Union forces in the War Between the States. In the month of August of this year Irving Babbitt was born in Dayton, Ohio. Thus the future master of a world-wide erudition was the gift, not of New England, but of the Middle West to his land and his time. At the time of Babbitt's birth his father was a partner in a business school in Dayton. There were evidently a good many vicissitudes in the practical life of the family, for a part of Babbitt's boyhood was spent in New York City and a part in East Orange, New Jersey. In each situation he attended the public schools. At one time he sold newspapers in the streets of New York, and when fists were necessary to maintain his position he used his fists. It is evident all through his boyhood

and young manhood that Babbitt had firsthand and unprotected contact with life. And sometimes it was life in the raw.

After the death of his mother when he was a lad of eleven, Irving lived with his grandparents near Cincinnati. Here he attended the small district school. He met nature directly in fields and woods, and there is a pleasant and rather amusing picture of his picking blackberries and attempting to preserve them in jars which he did not seal adequately. The result was a series of minor explosions with the fermented juice flying all about. We see him on a wagon in the morning going to the market in Cincinnati with products which would there have a ready sale. There is a memory of a group of boys drinking hard cider from a barrel. Irving was proud of the fact that he was not one of the lads who fell unconscious. His mind was evidently awake and alert, for at sixteen he passed with more than good credit an examination which gave him the right to be a teacher in a district school.

At about this time his father married again, and Irving found himself living in Cincinnati. The high-school period arrived, and two of the summers deserve special note. One of them found him a reporter in Cincinnati. The other found him a cowboy on the ranch of his uncle in Wyoming. This summer often found Irving in the saddle all day. There were nights in the open, and there were journeys with cattle to Chicago. We are told of his dragging a rattlesnake from a hole by its tail and fighting with an eagle whose talons left marks upon his hand.

The hot summer of reporting found Irving with a group of men busy with news of the police court and intimately familiar with the seamy side of life. Altogether the young man was getting to know his America with rather wide-open eyes. He stayed in high school, we are told, longer than was necessary. At his graduation he gave an address before a very large audience in the old Cincinnati Music Hall. Oddly enough, the next

year he returned to the high school and spent some time studying chemistry and civil engineering.

At the age of about twenty, Babbitt managed to get into Harvard. He used to make the interesting comment that he entered Harvard rather overprepared. One thing of tremendous importance for his future life happened during these student days. He took his junior year abroad, and with a classmate made firsthand contact with a number of lands as he walked through France, Spain, Italy, and Switzerland, down the Rhine, and through Holland. In a very definite way his feet were on the ground as he studied not merely books but life in Europe. In 1889 Babbitt graduated from Harvard. For two years he taught at the University of Montana. Then he went abroad for a year of study in Paris. He continued the oriental studies which he began under Sylvain Lévi at Paris with Professor Lanman at the Harvard Graduate School. Here Paul Elmer More was a fellow student.

Next came a year at Williams College, where he taught French, Spanish, and Italian. Mrs. Babbitt, to whom we owe so many interesting details regarding his life, says that when he was at Williams his appearance was so youthful that one day a library attendant, finding him in the stacks, gave him the information that no freshmen were allowed in that part of the building!

In 1894 Babbitt went back to Harvard to teach in the French department, and here he spent the rest of his life. In 1902 he became an assistant professor, and in 1912 a full professor. Professor Babbitt made three trips abroad after settling at Harvard. In 1907-8 he spent part of his sabbatical year in Paris and part of it walking in the Lake Country in England. In 1923 he was exchange professor at the Sorbonne. In 1928 he was in Italy, Greece, France, and England. In 1926 he was made a corresponding member of the French Institute, and in 1930 he was elected a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He was an honorary fellow of the American Academy

of Arts and Sciences and an honorary member of the Harvard chapter of Phi Beta Kappa. In 1930 Babbitt married Dora Drew, whose wide experience, intellectual acuteness, and gracious ways made a contribution to his life and usefulness it is difficult adequately to describe. He lectured all over the United States—most often in the Middle West and the Far West. His final important lectures were given at the University of Toronto in 1931. His last illness was already making itself felt when in 1932 he received the honorary degree Doctor of Humane Letters from Bowdoin College. Slowly but definitely his health grew worse, and on July 15, 1933, he died at his home in Cambridge.

II

Irving Babbitt has often been likened to Samuel Johnson. It may be said that he did not have a Boswell, but actually something was done along that line. Men who were masters of a singular verbal felicity described the man and his ways. Stuart Sherman wrote a memorable account of Babbitt in the classroom. Paul Elmer More left an account of memories of distinctive interest and value. Professor G. R. Elliott wrote a description of Babbitt and his ways which has its own point. Then a large group of his students and friends and colleagues produced the remarkable volume *Irving Babbitt, Man and Teacher*. This volume is packed with incident and comment and estimate, and is rich with many memories. The man himself lives in it as few teachers have lived in the memorials which have been left behind. Many of Babbitt's *obiter dicta* appear; and the quick, epigrammatical turn of his speech with its flashes of uncanny insight is brought home to the reader.

You see Babbitt moving about Cambridge on the run to take care of his magnificent body. You see him in his home, meeting students with courteous understanding and with flashes of intellectual energy to which they looked forward, and which in some measure they dreaded. You see him walking in town

or country, so busy that he did not notice beauties unfolding in sky or hill or valley; or, on the other hand, suddenly stopping to breathe in the spell of a particular bit of nature's loveliness and then going on with incredible momentum with whatever was in his mind. Paul Elmer More used to say of him that he was a good writer, a better teacher, and one of the great masters of good talk who had appeared in America. His students and friends all remember his conversation, and it is not long until they come to speak of his entirely amazing erudition. It almost seemed that he never forgot anything he had ever read. And the sentence he quoted often came like the swift firing of a gun. He was a great hunter before the Lord. And he was especially a hunter of thoughts. He was all the while showing connections between ideas. They might be Greek. They might be Latin. They might come from ancient India. They might be remorselessly contemporary.

He always held people responsible for what was involved in their statements. He had a skill in unearthing unnoticed contradictions in famous writers which was fairly uncanny. He read contemporary newspapers of every kind. He perused contemporary books of every sort. He was always asking what they revealed about the minds from which they came. He loved to reduce men to absurdity by quoting what they had said or what they had written. You might find Henry Ford jostling Aristotle in one of his addresses. And if Ford suffered by the juxtaposition, it was not that Professor Babbitt wanted to make him personally ridiculous but that he had unwittingly revealed some limitation in the mind of America which Babbitt wished to attack.

He was always ready to let contemporary journals reveal their crassness and ineptitude. He attacked, not by bursting adjectives, but by deadly quotations. He was always ready to let the beastly view of the universe express itself by means of the voices of the beasts. He was always quoting even great books to establish one position or to attack another. The feel-

ing he undoubtedly possessed for the sheer grace and loveliness of good writing did not often find expression in his spoken or his written words. He believed heartily enough in literature as recreation. But he never thought of himself as master of the king's revels. And he did object when an actual master of the literature of recreation was set up as an intellectual and moral and spiritual guide, when all the while the cap of the jester and the bells of the court fool were much more evident than the voice of intelligence.

France had much to do with the making of his mind. The French wits must have talked to him even in his sleep. He felt the subtlety and acuteness of the French mind. He followed it in its hours of brilliant discrimination. He followed it in its hours of folly wearing royal robes. He followed it when it descended into ways of slime. And always he sought to comprehend and to lay bare the real meaning of the process which he was studying.

He studied every other literature with new qualities of critical and discriminating understanding because his mind had been, in a measure, made by the mind of France. But his contact with the raw actualities of life gave him something of the greatest importance. From the depths of an erudite argument he would emerge with an epigram or an illustration which, while perfectly urbane and violating no law of decorum, quickly established a sense that the man who was conducting the argument had looked with clear and honest eyes at almost everything there is to see in this odd phantasmagoria of human life. More has suggested that in his earlier life there was more of a tendency to make a point by a bit of rugged Rabelaisian wit than at a period farther along in his full maturity. However that may be, whatever strength there is in the good brown earth of man's very human life was his for the asking. He did not have to remember, Antaeus-like, to touch the soil.

Babbitt did not particularly like Anatole France's conception

of criticism as a man's adventures among the masterpieces. But his lectures were surely adventures among great ideas, and great and critical—as well as uncritical—attempts to understand life. He came to his desk with books and notes seemingly in a state of more or less confusion. But he seemed always to be able to find what he wanted. The ideas he was discussing took wing and flew rapidly from century to century. It was as if—to use an illustration he was fond of appropriating from Emerson—one great gentleman who had appropriated the best that had been thought and said in the world was bringing his vast experience to the class every time he spoke. This great gentleman was not a wandering Jew carrying horror from century to century. Rather, he had been kept alive to bring the best of many a century to his own. With him you walked the streets of Athens or Alexandria or Rome or Florence or Paris or London. But it was streets of the mind for which he cared the most. And it was palaces of thought in which he was most at home.

But he was more than a custodian of good memories. He knew all about the thoughts which had betrayed men. He understood perfectly well the great surrender as well as the great decision. And as he studied the brilliant fashions in which men have lost their way, there was something magnificently massive and overwhelmingly authoritative about his speech. New students were startled and overwhelmed. Some of them did not like what they heard. Some of them never did come to like that literary eruption of coruscating speech. But many who came to scorn remained to accept. Some of his most devoted disciples began by disliking everything he said. But gradually there emerged a pattern. And you had the feeling that it was woven of the very ripest and richest experience of the race. Best of all, it gave you a firm and dependable basis, using which your lever could move the world of ideas and experience to significant meaning and purpose.

Babbitt was all the while urging men to follow central ways

of thinking to find an ordered life of the mind and of conduct free from all wild extremes. But this he did with what amounted to such inner explosive energy, such cutting execution of deadly wit, and at times such awful though quiet power, that the thought must have occurred to more than one of his students that he was using all the romantic passion to make classic positions commanding. At times there was about him something of Paul Shorey's passionate pursuit of passionless perfection. But it was never heat without light. And it was never passion without intelligence. There was a goal for the journey in the cool, clear tablelands of the understanding.

So it was that, without his ever suspecting it, there came to be something of the seer about Babbitt. Men from the Far East found something in this lofty serenity which they could understand. And sometimes they used heightened words about it which filled even his friends with surprise.

How all these things came to be, we are to try to understand in the detailed analysis which is to follow.

III

In 1908 Professor Babbitt published his first book, which bore the title *Literature and the American College*. About half of the volume had already appeared in such periodicals as *Atlantic Monthly*, *The Nation*, and *Harvard Graduates' Magazine*. Already Babbitt felt that he had a cause, and he was using every opportunity to bring his positions to the attention of thoughtful men. In this volume he is all the while concerned with the difference between the law for man and the law for thing, which had been so sharply set forth by Ralph Waldo Emerson, and which, as was characteristic of the discursive mind of the sage of Concord, was sometimes remembered and sometimes forgotten in his own writings. Babbitt was very keen about the true meaning of humanism, a noble word which had and still has the marks of many vicissitudes

upon it. He sought to clarify its genuine meaning, and in a sense his whole life may be said to have a prolonged attempt to make his own definition clear and commanding. He always approached such a task with meticulous scholarship, but his writings came to life when he had cleared the way for the setting forth of his own convictions.

On the one hand, he felt that he lived in a world where undisciplined and expansive emotion was running riot. And on the other, he seemed to be in a world where human intelligence was busy studying subhuman relationships and making the result appear to be the whole of life and truth. Already he associated the reign of undisciplined emotion with Rousseau, of whom he was later to speak and write so much. And the study of the reign of physical laws which ignored specifically human meanings he associated with Francis Bacon. The two attitudes seemed to be far apart, but actually they had a way of coming together. The scientist who had achieved tremendous control over the forces of nature and who had made no critical study of the way of discrimination on the human level was likely to use his control of nature at the dictation of the undisciplined emotion which was fundamental to Rousseau. Because the control achieved by the scientist was external in its reach and its achievement, his whole view of life was likely to be external.

Babbitt always respected and appreciated the vast and many-sided achievements of science. It was superb when it was about its proper tasks. But when it attempted to apply the laws of things which it had discovered to that other mighty realm of human relationships, it was sure to go wrong. If by science you meant the discovery and the use of every truth you could find in every realm, nothing would have pleased Babbitt more than to be regarded as the exponent of the scientific mind. But he believed that the naturalistic scientist ignored truths even more important than those which he discovered, and so he set men going wrong. To the excess which surrendered to undisciplined emotion and

to the other excess which made laws which were operative on the physical level the be-all and the end-all of existence, he opposed that use of the mind which disciplines impulse and controls its mastery of nature for human ends. The control of nature which did not submit its power to true control on the human level seemed to him to be leading the world straight toward disaster. Already he was displaying that insight into the direction of commanding trends in the life of his time which is often fairly uncanny as we read what he said and what he wrote in the light of later events.

If the principles he was setting forth were sound, they had the very deepest significance for education. And so he turns to the fashion in which the replacing of human understanding by the attempt to make subhuman laws apply to all relationships was corrupting education. The principle of selection was being replaced by a quite uncritical gregariousness. The elective system had come to mean an education in which choices of the utmost gravity were made by students who lacked just the disciplined intelligence without which those choices could not be wisely made. Here Babbitt met head on the favorite educational theories of President Eliot. He did not shrink from the issue, and he carried on the discussion with the utmost candor. He was always careful to say that he was not in this sort of argument attempting a full and rounded estimate. Often the men he criticized were very great men. Often they had rendered or were rendering peripheral services of the utmost importance. He was discussing central trends. And he spoke with almost startling courage and with complete honesty. He was sure that when education was based upon uncritical surrender to expansive emotion, the results were sure in the long run to be tragic. He knew that the emotions upon which contemporary educationalists were basing their efforts were set forth in such a fashion as to seem suffused by the very greatest altruism. But an altruism not based upon a clear doctrine of control in the light of standards he was convinced

would go down before the aggressive instincts of men. The lust for power was sure to prove stronger than the energy of altruistic impulses. When undisciplined men were set serving the world, the situation was not promising. The education which ministered to expansive emotion and ignored the discipline of impulse was going wrong on first principles.

On the other hand, the stern demands of technical scholarship might seem to be doing at least something in the right direction. But Babbitt believed that the doctor's degree was placed upon an essentially false foundation. It furthered a conception of research in which devotion to the trivial for the sake of originality took the place of the investigation of the significant for the sake of understanding. Stiff methods, important upon their own level, were being used in such a fashion that they furthered a false cause. Indeed, the whole study of the classics, which were the gift of Greece and Rome, was being laid aside or corrupted. When it continued, a study of formal elements of construction was taking the place of a study of significant meanings. Philology and grammar were taking the place of an appreciation of the distinguished expression of the meanings of great culture. So the study of the humanities became the foe and not the friend of humanism.

In all this Babbitt was opposing not only the central enthusiasms of the administration of Harvard but also the passionate convictions of some of its most eminent scholars. The technicians did not always see that he was really saying of their work: "These things you ought to have done. But something more important you have left undone." And they did not always appreciate the meticulous quality of his own wide-ranging scholarship, though it must be said that, as the years went by, the most learned became wary of contradicting Babbitt in a point of technical scholarship. It is no wonder that his path became difficult and thorny. But he pursued his way with urbanity and good humor and rather astonishing self-control. It is clear, however, that

he had nailed his flag to the mast. He had found the work of his life, and he would not shrink from paying the price which it required.

IV

Irving Babbitt's second book, *The New Laokoön*, an essay on the confusion of the arts, was published in 1910. Its main conclusions had already been presented to his students in one of his courses at Harvard.

In the old Greek tale, Laocoön, a brother of Anchises, who was a priest of Apollo, had profaned the temple of the god, and he and his two sons were destroyed by serpents. The very famous expression of this story in art is the Laocoön group in the Vatican. It dates from the first century B.C., and had been the basis of endless discussion in the theory of art. The portrayal of intense agony in sculpture offended severe taste and led to the sharpest and most drastic criticism. G. E. Lessing, in a very famous piece of critical writing, made the Laocoön the basis of a study of the fashion in which different art forms were being confused. Poetry, he was sure, should deal with temporal, and painting with spatial relations. So he attacked what may be called the neoclassic confusion of the arts. Babbitt felt that this discussion, while it contained many significant observations, did not at all go to the root of the matter. There was a romantic confusion which was the really important subject for consideration. And it was this which he made the subject of *The New Laokoön*. As always in dealing with such matters, he discussed Lessing in his relation to earlier thinking, to the situation in which he found himself, and to such matters as German and French culture, with the most careful scholarship. To him the whole study was an enterprise in comparative criticism based upon an ample knowledge of comparative literature. He touched other arts at necessary points for his argument, with due modesty but with the kind of competence which showed that he had made careful investigation

before he entered upon downright statements of estimate and judgment.

Babbitt takes technical excellence seriously enough. But he recognizes the danger which makes itself felt when the form is made more important than the substance with which it is connected. When the classic ideal is connected with deep realities, you have the truly classic. When the external form becomes more important than the inner spirit, you have the artificialities of the pseudoclassic. The good and the bad use of the doctrine of imitation comes in here. When you turn from the thing itself to models, the artificial comes in, and you have the sort of imitation which leads away from true excellence. When you imitate not a book, but the essential quality which informs and gives characteristic excellence to its author, you are moving along the line of true imitation. So the pseudo-classicist becomes devoted to artificial distinctions. The true classicist is devoted to deep and genuine distinctions. It is easy in this way for the sense of form to become a sense of the formal, for a sense of the formal to become merely a sense of the external, and for genuine and permanent distinctions to be lost in the midst of a sense of trivial relationships. So to be saved from formal confusion—while sometimes very important—is never quite enough. It is the blurring of distinctions upon a deeper level which we must watch and avoid. And here the substitution of impulse for reason and of impulse for disciplined impulse must be confronted and understood and criticized. The cult of the spontaneous came as a very natural—and in a sense as a healthy—reaction from the cult of the artificial. But it soon became the surrender to a quite lawless stream of furious emotion. The fear of thought obsesses the apostle of the spontaneous. Rousseau was sure that the man who thinks is a depraved animal. Shrewd common sense is suspected as the foe of the creative impulse. And a hedonist like Professor Saintsbury is ready to assure us that when common sense enters, the glow of imagination and the richness of poetry vanish.

When spontaneous impulses are given full sway, you come at last to a position like that of Dante Gabriel Rossetti when he made a series of amazing declarations. He would not know the soul of his lady from her body. He would not know her from himself. He would not distinguish their love from God. Here you have a confusion which goes to the very roots of the matter. Distinctions upon which the very continuance of life and morals depend are abolished. Here you have a confusion expressing itself in the terms of art which comes to be a confusion in respect of the very central matters of life. When, as with Rossetti, you come to the place where the soul is completely mixed with the body and no true distinction is seen between the sensual and the spiritual, you have come to a level where matters necessary not only to the highest living but even to civilized living have been lost. It is against this confusion that *The New Laokoön* protests.

All this comes out of the pit of naturalism. And naturalism is an even greater danger to life than to art, though it threatens the validity and the integrity of both. Babbitt is careful to make very clear that he is not the foe of throwing off the outer limitations which have no connection with reality and the artificial limitations which, at the very moment when they have lost validity, command slavish loyalty. It is the attitude which throws off all distinctions to which he strenuously objects. When the rushing energy of the poet refuses to subject itself to any law above its own tempestuous energy, something is vitally wrong. He remembers the law eternal in the heavens of which the *Antigone* of Sophocles speaks. He goes back again to the distinction between the law for man and the law for the thing. The pure naturalist is one who has lost the law for man under the remorseless tyranny of the law for the thing. The truth is that man really grows in the perfection which we have a right to associate with his own nature only as he grows in restraint and in self-control. The great surrender leads to the great confusion.

Obviously the whole matter requires clear and hard thinking. When law becomes mere formalism, it has ceased to be the true law. But when we have become so afraid of formal laws that we repudiate true laws, we are in bad case indeed. We need to substitute vital control for vital impulse. This human control must master the impulses of the romantic, and the mathematical uniformities which are the concern of so much of the activity of science. When we have come to actual achievement along this line, all our days will not be trances and all our nights will not be dreams. The play of impulse will be given its place. But in all important matters it will be subjected to a higher control. Greek art at its best expresses humane restraint with something like finality. And Babbitt gathers the elements of his discussion together by protesting against the setting of color above design, illusion above informing purpose, and suggestiveness above symmetry. He has traced the confusions which have entered not only into modern art, but very especially into modern life, to two sources: emotional unrestraint and pseudo science. Babbitt's final position, as set forth in this book, is that man may combine an exquisite measure with perfect spontaneity, that he may be at once thoroughly disciplined and thoroughly inspired.

V

Quite frankly Babbitt stated that once and again he was dealing with the main trend of a particular writer or of a particular movement, and so he was not attempting to make a completely amplified statement. There was one exception in respect of this method. In 1912 he published his masterful book *The Masters of Modern French Criticism*. Here he did attempt something like a fully rounded statement in respect of each of the writers discussed. He allowed them to speak for themselves. And he treated each with a certain amplitude and fullness. Here too, however, he was building up certain critical positions which were of importance for his own work. He believed that France in the period discussed was rather at the center of critical think-

ing in Europe. If you really understood what was going on in France, you understood what was going on in the world.

Madame De Staël, contemporary of Napoleon, was an apostle of understanding. She was constantly interested in national traits. But she would have the understanding and expression of national traits enriched by a certain cosmopolitanism. She believed that the literature of the South could be described as classic, and that of the North as romantic. She was all for a certain richness of life scarcely mastered by an adequate restraint. She was indeed very much for a literature which expressed sympathy rather than discipline. All this comes out in her highly praised and widely influential book on Germany. This tremendous emphasis on an understanding based on sympathy tended toward a certain lawlessness. The expansive emotions were enthroned rather than controlled. She understood the possibilities of friendly understanding rather than the definitive importance of critical discrimination.

Joubert had sharply criticized Madame De Staël. He felt that her ethical quality was corrupted by her enthusiasm. He wanted to find the meaning of life not below the level of ordinary intelligence, as Rousseau was inclined to do, but above it. He wanted to transcend both the irrationally rational and the lawlessly imaginative. He was for order. But in his orderly life form was to be saved from becoming mere formality. He was so free from obsession with the physical that sometimes it seemed that it was rather by accident that he had a body. He believed with all his mind in restrained passions. It was his essential virtue that he found something enduring in man and set about making the most of it.

Chateaubriand presents certain difficulties to the critic of critics. In his thought you can find classical elements. In his thought you can find pseudoclassical elements. In his thought you can find romantic elements. He stands out as a person devoted to the Christian religion. But perhaps the devotion was more aesthetic than spiritual. He felt that reason destroyed the

imagination. He had more of a sense of the richness of diversity than of the importance of a unifying principle. He was useful in penetrating through the covering to something at the heart of writing, which he was discussing. He often wrote with a certain delicate penetration. Perhaps it is true that he had romantic reasons for loving the classic, and that incompletely analyzed classical sympathies led him at times into the pseudoclassic. Perhaps it is not too much to say that he will be remembered for his taste rather than for his intelligence.

To Babbitt, Sainte-Beuve is a person of the greatest importance. He is ready to treat him critically. But he glows as he writes of him. The battle of the century between the great tradition and naturalism came to full expression in the thought and writings of Sainte-Beuve. He was a naturalist with his mind. He captured the good central things of tradition with his taste. He had a strange capacity to get at the heart of a man, a situation, or an ensemble of ideas. When he declared that Chateaubriand was an epicure who chanced to have a Catholic imagination, he was fairly uncanny in his insight. And this sort of thing happens again and again. He studied positions which he disliked. He studied positions which he repudiated. And he always gave them their day in court. He exercised qualities which his naturalism could never have accounted for his possessing in creating a criticism of great humane distinction. He was a scholar of the most meticulous accuracy. He came to no certainties himself. But he tried to express faithfully the certainties of others. If this seems to put the matter too strongly, we may remember that he did have a certain belief in the movement of science. And he did use humanistic standards. They rooted, however, more in taste than in conviction. His erudition was immense. To read him was, in the widest sense, to hear the voice of literature and the very voice of life. But the botanist of souls and the naturalist of minds did his best work when he transcended his own principles. If he had been no more than the author of a natural history of literature, he would not be the Sainte-Beuve we know.

Science and faith fought in Schérer. And in the end he uses a mind for which the flux could not account to reduce everything to flux. But he could not get away from the lucid intelligence of Sainte-Beuve. Schérer saw correctly many contemporary chimeras. He could only fight them with disillusionment. Schérer could be severe enough in judgment. He had scarcely an adequate philosophy of the judicial function. The fruits of his judgment are often better than its roots.

Taine puts the naturalistic side of Sainte-Beuve in complete command of his mind. He writes of literary products as if he were writing of vegetation. He is all the while applying the methods of pseudo science to the soul. He never rises above botany and zoology in dealing with life on the human level. He is an apostle of exaggerated determinism.

Renan tried, too, to be a scientist and a positivist. But he had a way of suffusing his science with religious feeling. He is inclined to use the historical method to explain everything. Even God evolves. He had a fascinated interest in the Christian religion, but it was at heart warm sentimentality rather than understanding. In many respects he possessed tremendous intelligence. He was scarcely a philosopher. He brought great gifts to his historical study. And he was a supreme artist in style.

Brunetiere liked to think of himself as a judge in a hostile world. His life as a critic is a series of belligerent campaigns. He fought against the fashion of thought which lost man in nature. He believed that we must master our sensations and emotions by reason. He wanted to oppose something permanent to the flux. He almost always asked the right questions, though he did not always have adequate answers. He tried to escape from the age into the Christian ages. But he scarcely found a deep unification of his life and thought. Perhaps Christianity was to him more of an escape than a goal of his thought. His great qualities were important and useful. They were scarcely enough to meet the critical problems of his age. This may account for Babbitt's saying of him that he is always lucid but rarely lumi-

nous. But it must be said that he fought things which needed to be fought.

So we meet many fascinating minds. They react in good fashion from things which deserve their scorn. But they do not really find a land of the true desire of the mind and the most serious life. They never find a real middle ground between Proteus and Procrustes. All too seldom do they acquire the true sympathetic selectivity of the humanist. All too often, to use Joubert's phrase, do they lack skylights. We must move from them to a world whose values are more secure, and we must find more adequate methods than they knew for defending and maintaining their noblest insights.

All this discussion is conducted by Babbitt with an erudition which is fairly breath-taking. He moves from century to century and from land to land. He finds time to go deeply into the significance of Goethe and to analyze the many-sided and not always consistent qualities of Emerson. There is endless cross-fertilization and perpetual reference to intellectual, social, emotional, and political backgrounds in his thought. He greatly enjoys these masterful French critics. They belong to his own circle when they go out to and when they return from the joust. And all the while he is seeing the failure of positions which put lawless emotions in the place of disciplined vitality. He is clearing the field for a criticism in which the higher will conquers wayward wills, and clearly-held purpose bends rich emotions to its own high ends.

VI

Seven years passed between the publishing of *The Masters of Modern French Criticism* and the issuing of the great and definitive work *Rousseau and Romanticism* in 1919. There is less sense of movement in following the work of Irving Babbitt than in similar studies of many other men. He found his commanding principles early, and he followed them faithfully all the way through his life. But one does have a sense of increasing depth

and many-sided awareness as the years go by. He has clues which he constantly uses in his vast reading, and all the while he is coming to a more solidly buttressed criticism of life. The conviction constantly deepened that in many ways the most conspicuous influence in the modern world was Jean Jacques Rousseau. And in parallel fashion the conviction also constantly deepened that this influence had been disintegrating and destructive. He saw many peripheral contributions of Rousseau which were good, and sometimes he stopped to speak of them. But he was most deeply interested in the central drive of his thought and its ill effect upon the thought and life of the world. Only a close study of this commanding work will give the reader any adequate sense of its importance and effectiveness. And he will need to come to it with a definite knowledge of the history of life and thought—especially, but not merely, during the last two centuries. We can take up only some of its outstanding positions in relation to Babbitt's thought as a whole.

One must begin with a significant concession. Pseudoclassicism had become hard and formal and artificial enough. A reaction from its conventional externality was long overdue. And in this sense the protest of Rousseau was all to the good. But he went to the very opposite extreme. From rigid convention he went to the worship of impulse, which had no spur and was subjected to no check. From civilization he turned back to the primitive. From what he regarded as a decadent sophistication he went back to what he regarded as man in a state of nature. He regarded man as noble by nature but corrupted by civilization. The lovely man he found in a state of nature was, of course, a myth. The primitive man without discipline or restraint would not be an improvement upon the man of conventional sophistication. Neither, of course, would be particularly desirable.

As a matter of fact, there was a widespread cult of going back to nature. It rapidly became little more than a sentimental dream. But the principle of blaming society for all one's weaknesses and frustrations, and even for one's deliberate wrongdoing,

contained the kind of moral poison against which it is very necessary that civilized men should be on their guard. If the best an interpretation of life can do is to enable us to escape the sort of responsibility which should rest very securely upon our shoulders, it is rendering a far-reaching disservice. There is something very attractive about the idea of floating on the stream of our natural impulses. But in that direction something even more dangerous than madness lies. The spontaneous is very alluring. But it must feel upon it the check of a masterful intelligence if all is to be well. When men surrender unquestioningly to their impulses, biology in the long run triumphs over spirituality. And what is taken at first for spirituality turns out to be merely expansive emotion. The altruism which is supposed to belong to us as long as we are not corrupted by society turns out to be a very questionable impulse. To suppose that by following the uninhibited desires of the self we will turn out to be sublimely unselfish is extraordinarily naïve.

The cult of the primitive goes right against facts of human nature which are quite open to immediate and everyday inspection. But, as a matter of fact, the altruism which depends upon undisciplined good nature not only is under grave suspicion from the start, but it soon develops into something very far removed from the kindly service which it is supposed to inspire.

The cult of service, too, has been very widespread. But when it has no basis in disciplined character, the lust for generosity soon changes to the lust for power. And the lust for power has a way of casting any sort of scruple aside and becoming an orgy of cruelty. It is not an accident that Robespierre was one of the most devoted disciples of Rousseau. The lust for power always turns out to have more driving energy than the feeling for kindness. Altruism must have a basis far more firm and far more secure if it is to be a real power in the world.

As the apostle of the cult of natural goodness goes on with his personal experience, he confronts disillusionment after disillusionment. When the facts contradict his happy anticipations, he

is likely to take refuge in a world of revery, a dreamland which satisfies his emotions though it has no basis in the reality of things. It is really a projection of selfishness in a sort of magnificent defiance of actuality. So a man may hug his dreams and for a period have the false happiness which comes from a complete break with reality. But the ivory tower, which may be a pleasant place to give a moment's relaxation to a weary man, is a very bad home for the human spirit. Unwelcome facts will break in. The romanticist may try to satisfy himself by indulging in bitter and biting irony, all the while greatly admiring himself for passing beyond the stage when he was taken in by life. He may become a perfect spitfire of corrosive phrases. But words are a poor substitute for deep human experience, and a sense of the actual desolation and loneliness of his world is sure to come home to the man who has passed from false ideals to dreams, from dreams to irony, and from irony at last to depths of self-pity profound and terrible. So the man who began by loving everything and everybody is likely to end by hating everything and everybody. For a while he may wear his melancholy like a rich and somber garment. Now he becomes proud of his suffering and regards himself as unique in agony. If he cannot enjoy perpetual happiness in a world of lawless good feeling, he can at least be a prince of lonely and selfish melancholy. In the meantime, with no check upon the complete expression of his impulses, somewhere along the road of his investigation of emotions and sensations he will have followed the lure of a compelling sensuality. At first he may try to combine the satisfactions which come from a reputation for virtue with what he is inclined to regard as the very solid satisfactions of vice. But a man with vivid self-consciousness and lively intelligence can descend to depths of beastliness which a beast would never achieve. So a secret sensuality becomes sensuality rampant. But biological experiences which may have a gracious place in a well-ordered life become themselves mad creatures of angry disillusionment when they are put in command of a man's life. The cold shell of the sensualist

becomes at last the center of a conscious decay which hates itself.

In all these fashions and in many others Babbitt studies the pathology of romanticism. He studies it in Rousseau and in many another figure until at last the worship of temperament and the surrender to its undisciplined behests stands forth in its true colors, seen with complete clarity and critical understanding. And because all this is not a nightmare of the imagination but an account of something which had become a compelling actuality in many a life and in many a nation, the analysis is of primary importance to anyone who would understand the strange diseases which have settled upon the modern world.

VII

Irving Babbitt was the last man in the world to be contented with a merely cloistered and academic life. He was constantly and vividly interested in everything that was going on in the actual world about him. He was constantly reading papers which one would never have expected him to read. He was all the while showing himself to be in command of facts which one would not have supposed to come within his ken. He wanted all his vast study and erudition to become available for the criticism and the guidance of men who were busy with the tasks and the responsibilities of contemporary life. So in 1924, five years after the publishing of *Rousseau and Romanticism*, his searching study of the application of his principles to matters political and social, bearing the title *Democracy and Leadership*, came from the press. To reread it a little over a quarter of a century after its publication is a sobering experience. If we test the profoundness of his understanding merely by the number of cases in which his prophecies of what would occur under certain conditions have actually come true, the case for his positions becomes most impressive.

In this volume, as always, he goes back to the principles lying deep in and behind the situations which he is analyzing. He is saying always that material progress is not necessarily moral

progress. He is saying always that external control unaccompanied by inner discipline always spells social and political tragedy. He analyzes many types of political thinking, but he comes at last to one fundamental contrast. It is that between the political thinking which in one way or another stems out of the idyllic imagination of Rousseau and that which has incorporated such insights as are found in Burke's use of the moral imagination as the basis for political thought and action. The political thinker of unleashed imagination may set forth his positions in the most varying forms of thought. He may be a wild-eyed dreamer. Or he may be as hard and unethical as Machiavelli. But he is always trying in one way or another to harness expansive imagination to political and social tasks. Or he is approaching these problems with no principles which command his allegiance, and with only a hard—and even cruel—expediency to guide his hand. On the one hand, you have a view of life with no center of judgment in the midst of the flux of impressions and actions. On the other, you have sound judgment based upon authenticated standards. In the one way, civilized life is rushing toward destruction. In the other, it may secure a solid and dependable basis and look forward to a future with some element of security.

The question of how to secure these standards is of pivotal importance. The reply is that a use of what may be called the moral imagination, with a scent for permanent principles and abiding meanings as it surveys the vast material of human thought and action as the past has revealed it, will give a basis in true understanding and in definite standards with which to approach the problems of our own time. And here everything depends upon the right kind of leadership. If we substitute for the doctrine that the king can do no wrong the other doctrine that the people can do no wrong, we are on the way to disaster. The tyranny of mob impulse may easily turn out to be as bad as—or worse than—the tyranny of an absolute monarch. The impulses of the crowd are not a good substitute for the bad purposes

of a tyrant. The true veto power must be exercised over expansive and uncriticized impulse. This means that a democracy must have leaders capable of exercising critical judgment. And it must follow these leaders. The wisdom of the ages must be available, and must be used in the solution of the problems of the age. This means that back of good public action there must always be that moral discipline of the mind and the purpose of the leader which saves him and those whom he leads from the follies and the tragedies of unleashed emotion. In this fashion the democracy must come to have the aristocratic virtues. It must understand the use of selection, and it must always have ready the check of commanding judgment ready to exercise itself in the presence of lawless emotion.

All of this demands a type of education which will bring the ripened wisdom of the ages to bear upon the problems of the age. And when the processes of education themselves represent a surrender to and not a criticism of the vivid impulses of the masses of men, disaster is ahead. It flatters men to describe them as victims of society rather than to appeal to their capacity to judge of their own conduct as they look back into the past, as they appraise the present, and as they look forward to the future. But only as education represents a school of judgment will it prepare men for the actual tasks of living. In a democracy such an education is not only important; it is imperative.

Babbitt is always very anxious to secure the widest possible basis in human experience for the standards which he is advocating. So we find him not only going back to Aristotle for the use of experience to find standards, even for civilized life, but we find him turning to Asia to see what help, if any, can be found there. And it is soon very evident that in Confucius he finds a humanist of sorts. Here was a man who always endeavored to study the past thought and experience of his people so as to find a good basis for permanent human relationships. The case of India is more complicated, but Babbitt believes that he finds in the Buddha back of conflicting human traditions a sound basis

for the discipline of desire as over against the surrender to gregarious impulse. And, of course, he finds in Christian teaching no end of positions which correspond to his own central convictions. If he does not make more of this aspect of the situation, it is because he wants to put his own teaching upon a positivistic basis.

The word liberal has had great and widespread appeal in our time. Such a word Babbitt always wants to subject to the closest and clearest analysis. The distinction between true and false liberals may turn out to represent just the difference between true and false leadership. The false liberal sinks below the ordinary levels of human experience in his inevitable surrender to man on the natural level. The true liberal confronts the judgment of something in man which observes and analyzes and estimates the value of all his thought and action. Call this the moral imagination, call it the higher self, call it what you will, it is a fact whose existence you cannot deny. And it represents an opportunity to attain a life on the level of disciplined understanding. It is here that the true liberal takes his stand. And it is thus that he becomes capable of dependable leadership.

It all comes at last to the matter of the relation between democracy and standards. If the citizen of a democracy has no standards, he is moving toward disillusionment and disaster. If he has bad standards, the case is even worse. His only hope is in finding something which will preside over his vagrant desires and will bend them to good purposes. The corrupt politician gains his power by appealing to the undisciplined impulses of the voters. The statesman appeals to their capacity for seeing standards and for following them. The one surrenders to vital impulse. The other represents vital control. Men must be taught to exercise an inner control upon the undisciplined expansion of natural impulse. It is easy in a democracy for the lust for power to take the place of a disciplined altruism. Men must be taught not to look down to the world of impulse for guidance. They must be taught to look up to the world of judgment. A

vital and intelligent insight must take the place of lawless impulse on the one hand and mechanical standardization on the other. So shall men be saved from the control of incompatible desires. And so shall they be taught to enter a true school of judgment. It is the leaders who can give guidance which will achieve these ends who will truly serve democracy. So shall a democracy of critical understanding be put in the place of a democracy which has no law but its own impulses. So democracy will be saved from its lower self and be made capable of existing upon the level of the true meaning of its own life.

VIII

As the years moved on, what had been academic discussion became actual battle upon the large field of public opinion. The organs of public discussion were, in rather large measure, under the control of apostles of the flux. They instinctively recognized that the type of classical humanism represented by Babbitt and More was their deadly foe. So they rushed to combat. It must be frankly stated that most of these literary warriors were quite unprepared to meet the arguments of such giants of erudition as Babbitt and More on their own level. So the campaign became one which, in altogether too great a part, consisted in the slinging of ugly words which were characterized by malice rather than by intellectual insight. Even those who were better prepared too often allowed their emotions rather than their knowledge and their understanding to get command of their pens. So the last years of Babbitt were passed in a whirl of conflict. He had very large classes at Harvard and a new sort of hearing all about the country. But the fiery eruption of unintelligent malice on the part of his foes cast a certain cloud of sadness over Babbitt's last years. He did not shrink from the fight. His criticism of uncritical critics became more penetrating and more corrosive. His own belligerent writing was suffused with the closest and clearest thought. But in hard hitting he gave more than as much as he received. When he accused one of his

most crass and crude critics of having a worm's-eye view of most of the topics he discussed, he combined accuracy with deadly execution.

The atmosphere of battle gives a certain sharp astringency to the volume of essays entitled *On Being Creative*, which was published the year before Babbitt's death. In the introduction he quoted Cicero, whom he regarded as one of the most influential of Occidental humanists. Cicero had found in man appetite and reason, and had stated without equivocation that it was fitting that reason should command and appetite should obey. This higher control over impulse was the very heart of the whole position of Babbitt. He found it threatened by the primitivists and the mechanists. The primitivist put the lower in control of the higher. The mechanist lived in a world where free control was logically impossible. The latter position to Babbitt represented pseudo science rather than science. He believed that the control of the lower by the higher was as much of a fact as mechanical interaction. And he was anxious to base his type of humanism firmly upon this basis of the observation of experience. It was easy to accuse a man who talked of control as completely failing to make a place for the creative spirit. Babbitt replied by saying that true originality is found not in novelty but in truth to the universal. And at this point of seeing the individual matter in its universal significance, control and creativity met in happy combination. This is the meaning of Aristotle's *katharsis*. Good literature must have excellence of form. It must also be sound in substance. As the critic, with the whole experience of the past at his disposal, studies literary products in the light of these principles, his own work becomes creative. Without this there can be learning in plenty, but there is no true judgment.

The primitivism of Wordsworth reveals a mind all too often going to the wrong sources for creative inspiration. The impulses of the vernal would scarcely lead to critical intelligence. The cult of the lowly easily leads to depths of folly. The cult of spontaneity easily becomes the cult of anarchy.

It is inevitable that Babbitt shall consider the relation of the imagination to these great matters. Cool common sense is not enough. The idyllic imagination betrays. So Babbitt looks to a higher imagination as a guide. When Coleridge insists that great poetry shall be representative, he speaks upon this high level. When he forgets this, he becomes rudderless.

A study of Schiller as aesthetic theorist gives Babbitt an opportunity for one of those wide-ranging discussions which consider background, pertinent parallels, and the critical insights of many writers, making it all converge upon an estimate of the quality of the critical opinions of Schiller. The conclusion of the whole matter is that Schiller made the mistake of going back to the primitive to solve problems which can only be rightly met on the humanistic or the religious level. He found his goals not by rising above but by sinking below the human level. When idyllic imagination takes the place of critical intelligence, you move away from true understanding. It is always dangerous to make an expansion of the emotions a substitute for ethical concentration. Babbitt contrasts the work, *On the Sublime*, connected with the name of Longinus, and its author's belief that the curb as well as the spur is needed with that conception of aesthetic values which never considers the need of the curb at all. When liberty is regarded as the throwing off of limitations and there is no careful consideration of the necessity of taking on limitations, liberty is moving toward anarchy. Schiller did not understand the necessity for the discipline of the imagination.

In an essay on *The Critic and American Life* Babbitt uses sharp weapons. In a time when we need a Socrates, we seem to be able to provide only a Mencken. Mencken is capable enough of severity, but he lacks discrimination. He is a person depending on temperament rather than on understanding. He has turned from soft sentimentality to hard sentimentality, and so he thinks that he is a realist. But he has no true understanding of the principle of control. Babbitt quotes the saying of Wil-

liam C. Brownell that it is possible to consider oneself emancipated when one is merely unbuttoned.

The questions of moral freedom and of moral control are central. Theodore Dreiser's *American Tragedy* has only suffering. It does not understand the true tragedy which consists in the misuse of freedom. Such fatalism has filled contemporary writing with a heavy sense of futility and frustration. But freedom must have material upon which to work. America has suffered from the lack of standards which culture alone can give.

IX

In 1940, seven years after Babbitt's death, the posthumous volume of his writings, *Spanish Character and Other Essays*, was published. The material to be found in this volume is a reflection of various interests which characterized its author. There are attempts at rounded estimate and judgment. There are brilliant arguments in favor of his characteristic theses. There are sharp criticisms of thinkers whose positions seem to him to be completely at fault. There is the problem recurrent in Babbitt's thinking of the relation of Indian thought to the thought of the West.

The fascinating essay on "Spanish Character" combines friendly understanding with unhesitating criticism. Babbitt is glad to find that Spain has no decadent writers. In a way Spain seems hesitating between contradictory positions. And in her commerce with the great world, perhaps there has more often been an exchange of vices than an exchange of virtues. You have to watch the impatience of discipline.

You are in a different world when Babbitt raises the question as to whether the English are critical. Rather crisply he accepts the position that French character has often lagged behind the French mind, while in England one frequently encounters men who are giants of character but intellectually have something infantile about them. Of course he approached that learned

hedonist, Professor Saintsbury, with something not unlike complete hostility. In making its pleasure-giving qualities the definite matter in literature, Professor Saintsbury put the weight of his influence with the apostles of the flux. He says nothing which would help to guard men from impressionism and anarchy. The authority which had been given to Professor Saintsbury's epicurean romanticism in his own country does not inspire confidence in its critical sagacity.

On the other hand, Babbitt is willing to criticize his own land with as much acid as he has applied to England. And he is willing to use Matthew Arnold, whom he greatly admired, to provide a whip. He does not think that Arnold follows consistently or entirely lives up to his own principles. But he recognized the centrality of much of his thinking, and he is willing to admit that Arnold was right in saying that on the whole Americans are stronger in quantity than in quality.

Turning to Italy, Babbitt finds in Croce much peripheral strength and much central weakness. He has no goal set above the flux, and therefore no real standards of judgment. That criticism is not very lofty which merely represents surrender to the rushing tides of life.

The quick flash of the sword as Babbitt deals with Pascal's anti-humanistic tendencies, and the quiet appreciation of his central insights when he comes to deal with the level above the human, represent critical work of a very high order.

In Racine Babbitt finds a man who had his own artificialities, but who at his best left the drawing room for central insights regarding life. He leaves Arcadia for a genuinely human world.

Writing of Diderot, Babbitt is not attracted by his conception of the genius as a man who, though he must be delivered from artificial restraints, simply cannot control himself. Diderot breaks away from artificial decorum without reaching a genuine appreciation of true decorum.

When dealing with George Sand and Flaubert, Babbitt writes with secure acumen of two fascinatingly contrasted types.

When he comes to India, as we shall see in the next section, he makes the most of humanistic insights and is not always critical of central waywardness. (The phrase may be justified by the fact that the ultimate unity secured in Indian thought involves complete disintegration.)

The matter of education comes up again. Indeed, had Babbitt lived, his next book would have dealt with the problems of education. He is always engaged with the proper relation of technical research and large humanistic understanding. He pays his final respects and disrespects to his old antagonist, President Eliot, with warm appreciation of the man and sharp repudiation of the disintegrating aspects of his theories of education. It is clear enough that the elective system would never produce a society of the elect. The final essay sets forth Babbitt's firm and continued allegiance to standards and to conscious control. The true dualism of experiences must not be washed away in a false unity where the genuine distinctions vanish.

In these essays, as always, one notes the amazing combination of inner urbanity with caustic and corrosive criticism. He felt that he was fighting for civilization itself.

X

We have been giving Babbitt his day in court. We may best approach some matters requiring criticism through one of his posthumous works. In 1936, three years after Babbitt's death, under the editorial supervision of that gifted lady Mrs. Dora Babbitt, his wife, his own translation of the *Dhammapada* was published. The 423 verses of which the *Dhammapada* consists are found in the *Ti-pitaka*. Here we meet an expression of the Buddhist Canon as preserved in lands where the Hinayana (Small Vehicle) prevails. The language is Pali, described as a kind of softened Sanskrit. It was spoken in northeastern India about the sixth century B.C.

The *Dhammapada* is important because it is here especially

that Babbitt finds his justification for classifying Buddha as a humanistic figure. That in spite of all his years of study (and his own translation is based upon one by Max Müller, though he is always in contact with the text itself) he finds himself moving in very difficult territory is clear enough. Later writings reveal Buddhism caught in the clutches of positions with which Babbitt could have no commerce. Is he right in believing that the *Dhammapada* expressed definitively the central insights of humanism? The answer to this question is made possible by Babbitt's own translation of the *Dhammapada*. One can understand his enthusiasm for all that he finds in these verses calling for discipline and firm control. The call that man himself shall make an effort is clearly all to the good. The statement that the sage takes the balance and chooses the good and rejects the evil has the same quality of appeal. When a man is called a Brahman who does not sin in body, word, or thought, but in all these matters exercises control, we are almost ready to see the Brahman as a humanist. And so one might go on and on. Clearly there is much in the *Dhammapada* which strikes the humanistic note.

But does this go to the heart of the matter? One fears that it is not possible to say that it does. And here the definitive matter is the treatment of desire. Now there are three possible attitudes toward desire. One extreme involves the surrender to desire. The other extreme involves the extinction of desire. The middle position calls for the discipline of desire. Surely it ought to be clear at once that the third of these positions, calling for the discipline of desire, represents the true humanistic position. Now how does the *Dhammapada* stand in respect of these matters? The reply must be that again and again it calls not for the control of desire but for the destruction of desire. In other words, it surrenders to just the sort of extreme position against which true humanism always protests. Then the goal is one in which the very distinctions used on the way lose their significance and

their relevance. The true Brahman has no sorrow or remorse, though he has killed his father and mother, or even if he has destroyed a kingdom with all the people who belong to it. The goal is beyond merit and demerit. It is beyond good and evil. Clearly the whole movement of thought is toward that unity in which all significant distinctions are lost. The humanistic virtues for which the *Dhammapada* calls belong to a relative stage.

One who has not surrendered to the pantheistic monism of India can clearly recognize, not only in the *Dhammapada* but in many other expressions of Hindu thought, the call for something which, if made structural in permanent belief, would have the greatest importance. But in India it has a way of dissolving into a false unity.

Babbitt was right in seeing that the *Dhammapada* contains much which is significant for the humanist. He scarcely realized how often this material is in the nature of warning rather than guidance.

That the vast perspectives of Indian thought had something to do with a certain sense of serenity and richness which men often felt in Babbitt is surely true. The sense of illusion and, beyond illusion, peace has a certain noble spiritual allurements. But there is such a thing as a false illusion. And there is such a thing as a false peace. Almost instinctively Babbitt supplemented the relativity of Indian thought by the firmness and security of his own sense of the true quality of character. So he did not find all he thought he had found. And he brought more than he was conscious of bringing.

XI

The matter of Babbitt's relation to religion has been the source of confusing—not to say contradictory—statements. Paul Elmer More remembered the time when Babbitt shook his fist at a church as representing the foe he was girding himself to

fight. There are those who declare that Babbitt was disconcerted when he became aware that More was using the principles of humanism as an open door to entrance into the temple of faith. On the other hand, Babbitt said again and again that he had no quarrel with those who went beyond a positivistic type of humanism to a full faith. He declared that he took his stand unequivocally on the side of the supernaturalists.

Professor L. J. A. Mercier, Babbitt's colleague at Harvard, has very important words to say. Mercier has a place all his own among the students of classical humanism as it has expressed itself in our time. One of his books, which made a study of this movement in the United States, was crowned by the French Academy. And his two books *The Challenge of Humanism* and *American Humanism and the New Age* are a necessary part of the equipment of anyone who would write with competence on the subject. Not very long before Babbitt's death Mercier wrote an interpretation of his position, coming out with great friendliness for religion. He showed this to Babbitt and received his approval.

That Babbitt did not write from within the Christian tradition goes without saying. That he never entered that tradition so that it became a living faith is also true. But that he treated it with a respect which grew into something more than respect is also true, and it is very important.

One must never forget that Babbitt regarded himself as a responsible member of an important living movement. He knew that many people who were not ready to make the whole journey to the third level of divine sanctions were quite ready to enter fully upon the second level of human responsibility. It was to these especially that he spoke. It was particularly for them that he built his argument. He had no spiritual pilgrimage such as that which gives the central significance to the life of Paul Elmer More. But it may be said with some assurance that his own citizenship upon the second level allowed a not unfriendly perception of vistas beyond.

XII

Babbitt for his own purposes preferred the direct gaze at the facts of experience. He regarded this position as essentially positive, as distinct from a possible metaphysical position. The facts regarding the subhuman level of existence stood out clearly. But if one were to be honest, the facts about life on the human level stood out quite as clearly. The presence of a force of control in a world of impulse was ready to be found by anyone who would face the facts. And the masterfulness of discipline as a force to control impulse was there as well. Babbitt was at his best when he built his thought on facts of experience which cannot successfully be denied.

He was tempted to go farther. So his frequently expressed sense of illusion, of a lower illusion which was fatal and a higher illusion which was to be followed faithfully, came into his thought and his writing. And so his sense of the role of what he called the higher imagination came to have its place in his thought. And so he attempted to square his conception of the role of the reason with his positions in these matters. In all this he was scarcely remaining on that positive level which he claimed as especially his own. He did not distinguish between the loftiest use of the reason and the betrayals of formal logic. And neither in his psychology nor in his substitutes for metaphysical discussion was he particularly fortunate. His central insights did stand in their own right. And when he used his vast knowledge of the history of literature, the history of criticism, and the manifold ways of political thought to set them forth, he attained a height of remarkable impressiveness. It is a fascinating matter to distinguish between his thought and writing when he is moving with easy and masterful command of his materials and the somewhat uneasy movement of his mind when he is moving among conceptions which he scarcely thought through and, in any event, has not entirely clarified. His own central work is splendidly done. Clearly he

left work for others to do in relation to the full and many-sided structure of humanistic thought.

XIII

That many of the most characteristic movements of American thought during the last years of the life of Irving Babbitt were moving away from his central insights one would not be prepared to deny. But the frustration and the sense of futility which came to men and women as these movements progressed is the important matter for our consideration. You can defend a movement by analyzing its contents and by seeing it in action. And sometimes the most brilliant and convincing defense of a movement is to analyze the opposite positions and see what happens when they enter the world of action. It is clear that the furious and malicious attacks on Babbitt are becoming less frequent. And one now runs across writing, even on the part of those who do not accept his conclusions, which represents a willingness to give him his day in court and to use some intelligence in judging him. And those who have mastered his central contentions know that all he needs is to receive a genuine hearing. Literary profanity is not so much blasphemy as an indication of an empty head.

One can say without fear of successful contradiction that the more a man knows of the history of literature and the history of criticism, the more seriously he will take the thought of Babbitt. The man who knows the great masterpieces of literature and criticism is likely to have a mind already moving in the direction in which Babbitt would guide him. At least, he is ready to see the meaning of the guidance which Babbitt offers. Such brilliant and masterful books as Gilbert Highet's *The Classical Tradition*, written quite apart from the tradition of Babbitt, are the very best sort of preparation for the reading of his own books. No man can feel the full impact of learning and vitality and compelling expression in Highet's study of Greek and Roman influences on Western literature without coming

nearer to the place where the insights of classical humanism are the inevitable demand of his thought.

But life as well as letters calls a man to the consideration of the humanistic principles and the humanistic insights. The contemporary literature which describes the living of human life on a sub-human level is bound to be ephemeral in its power to command the minds of men. It simply leaves out that which is most characteristic of human life and experience.

And that highest level of all, toward which the noblest outreach of man's life moves, is best approached through that classical humanism which sees man poised between alternatives and making decisions in the light of the most commanding standards which he can find. Such experience prepares men for the greatest understanding and the greatest decision of all.

For these reasons, and for many others, the humanism of Irving Babbitt seems to contain secrets of vitality which the changing fantasies of men will scarcely touch. And the democracy whose surrender to lawless impulse would mean its disintegration requires these secrets of understanding not only for its survival but as a clue to the very meaning of its existence.

Paul Elmer More

VARIOUS CITIES of the Middle West in the United States have had their hours of literary activity. Indianapolis for a little while seemed bright with promise of a Hoosier school. Cleveland had a certain colorfulness in the days of John Hay and his contemporaries. Saint Louis, whose life united currents from New England and the South, was a meeting place of various traditions. At one time it seemed that William T. Harris might make it the center of an American school of Hegelianism. Chicago became the center of writers of various interests and enthusiasms. Many of them moved in and out of the Cliff Dwellers Club with its close associations with Hamlin Garland.

In a way regions came to self-consciousness in the writers of the Middle West. Life was portrayed sometimes lovingly, sometimes in a mood of indignation. Social problems, as they became urgent, found literary expression. Intellectually, morally, and spiritually there were signs that life was beginning to fall apart. Some sort of social integration might unite men. Otherwise they tended to disintegrate into separate units. In a fashion the way was being cleared for the far-off influence of Freud and Marx. All types of people were being united in the melting pot of American life, and as years went by there were times when the melting pot seemed like a witches' caldron. A prophet could have foreseen the day when there would be hot vitality, creative energy, decadent pessimism, and what seemed like vitality but was actually putrefaction; all strangely existing side by side.

Men moved toward instrumental forms of thought where the instrument became violent or futile because it was mastered and guided by no large understanding and no secure purpose. The classical tradition remained in the blood of thoughtful men, but with many the wildness of the wilderness tended to become a philosophy of life.

But the wild spirit of the pioneer met head on the mechanical controls of an industrial age. And so a great many new tensions were created. No doubt there were multitudes of quiet people who lived by the ancient lights. Some of them were conscious of their inheritance. Some lived by principles whose power of integration they felt but whose sources they had not analyzed. Belief in everyday men found a symbol in Abraham Lincoln.

The churches were often morally invigorating and spiritually enriching. But they were oddly sluggish in matters of critical intelligence. A notable and distinguished form of philosophical thought found vigorous expressions in the Methodist Church in Borden P. Bowne. But though it was more influential than the flare of idealistic thought earlier brought to New York by a disciple of Berkeley, it never became a masterful movement uniting large numbers of men in loyalty to its sanctions. When science—so triumphant in many lines of achievement—turned to attempt a philosophy of life, it was likely to be mechanical and materialistic, and almost as uncritical as the fundamentalism which barked at its heels. Uncritical pragmatism was to have its own day of wide and curious influence when John Dewey came. In the whole period between the Civil War in the United States and the outbreak of the World War in 1914, young men were born into a world where they were subjected to the most bewildering currents and driven about by endless energetic and mutually contradictory ideas.

I

Paul Elmer More was born December 12, 1864, in Saint Louis. It is noteworthy that this most patrician of American

critics was the gift of Saint Louis to the republic. There is no record, so far as I know, of his having been influenced directly by William T. Harris. But he was a student of the public schools of Saint Louis, and currents set going by Harris may well have reached him. Paul Elmer More was the seventh in a family of eight.

His father had reached the rank of brigadier general in the commissary department of the Union army in the War Between the States. He engaged in a number of business enterprises, sometimes with more and sometimes with less success. Katherine Elmer, the mother of Paul, was an eager and constant reader all her life. She was a person of hearty intellectual hospitality, and if her reading was uncritical, it kept the windows of her mind open. The More home was deeply religious, and Paul was brought up under the influence of a stout Calvinism which later he vigorously rejected.

As a boy with a vivid imagination, a keen sense of the dramatic, and an almost instinctive control over words, Paul held his young companions spellbound by stories of his own invention which he related to them. After completing his work in the public schools, Paul entered Washington University in Saint Louis. From this institution he received the A.B. degree upon his graduation in 1887.

Early in his university life his eyes completely failed him. His sister Alice, with more than sisterly devotion, read to him; and he was thus enabled to continue his work in school. In 1887 Paul became a teacher in Smith Academy in Saint Louis. This position held his attention for a number of years. He spent one year in Europe while associated with Smith Academy. In school or out, he was a constant and industrious student, and in 1892 he received a master's degree from Washington University. His thesis was written in Latin, but it has not been preserved.

In one way the most important event of these years was his complete break with the Calvinism in which he had been

brought up and with Christianity as he knew it. He became an out-and-out skeptic. His devotion to the skeptical ideal all his life is very significant. Indeed, it was as a skeptic that he returned at last to the Christian faith. But upon his break with Christianity More clasped romanticism with eager arms. This period of devotion to a movement against which his whole critical life was to be a protest is a matter of importance. He knew from within the very quality of that romanticism against which he put the whole weight of his mind. Babbitt, who was with More in the great fight, knew romanticism well, but he never knew it from within.

The cosmopolitan quality of More's mind was a matter of personal experience as well as of intellectual observation. He wrote poetry which, if not of great distinction, revealed a sensitive and responsive spirit. He was aware of the scientific movements of the time, but he never thought of science as Messianic; and he came to see the definite limits within which science must do its legitimate work. Ferdinand C. Baur's work upon Manichæan thought startled More into a new intellectual awareness. He saw the weaknesses and confusion of the Manichæan approach to life. But its vast sense of the conflict between good and evil, and its sense of the passion for happiness and the reality of pain, startled him into an awareness of things which lie at the very center of human experience.

More's book *The Great Refusal* is the expression of transition and growth. It is clear that while he seemed to have freed himself from the Christian religion, religion itself claimed his deep and earnest attention. And his sense of moral values was deepening all the while. He never used skepticism as an escape from moral responsibility.

In 1892 More went to Harvard. Indian religions became an engrossing study. From Harvard More received a master's degree in 1893. He was assistant in Sanskrit in the period immediately following. He was in Harvard thus for three years. He was all the while bent upon securing a large coverage of competent

knowledge rather than to become the great authority in some square inch of territory, so he did not seek a doctor's degree.

It was at Harvard that Paul Elmer More met a fellow student who was to have the most intimate relation to his life and work. Babbitt was also studying Indian thought and Indian religion. More was in the process of finding himself. Babbitt had already essentially reached those principles to whose exposition and defense he gave his life. The two became intimate friends, as they were to become comrades at arms in a great war of ideas. Babbitt's brilliant conversation stimulated More as he had never been stimulated by personal contact with any other person. On endless occasions they "tired the sun with talking and sent him down the sky." Romanticism was already losing its hold on More, and his friendship with Babbitt confirmed this movement of his thought. An uncritical romanticism could not survive the acid and antiseptic action of Babbitt's mind. And the interest in classical literature, which was by no means new to More, was confirmed and deepened by his friend.

When More left Harvard in 1895, he went to Bryn Mawr College to teach Sanskrit and classical literature. He was now busy at tasks of exact scholarship, and it is important to remember that the far-reaching movements of his thought never lessened the meticulous accuracy of his work as a technical scholar. In 1897 he turned from teaching a second time and entered upon the quiet and meditative life at Shelburne, of which we shall have more to say later. His adventures in Indian thought took form in his book of translations, *A Century of Indian Epigrams*. This was published in 1898. In 1898 he left Shelburne, and that winter found him at Cambridge with the Harvard library at hand. In 1900 he was married to Henrietta Beck. He entered the field of active critical professional work, and from 1901 to 1903 was the literary editor of *The Independent*. In 1903 More became literary editor of the *New York Evening Post*, and here he continued until he became editor of *The Nation* in 1909. He was editor of *The Nation* until

1914. It must be emphasized that he achieved very practical skill as an editor. He knew how to get very able men to write for him. And he knew how to use them in such fashion that they felt perfectly free and yet were a team working together in the great task of disciplining and guiding the taste of their public. *The Nation* changed into another sort of journal after More left it. But he also left memories of some of the most adequate and distinguished work which has been done in American criticism.

When he retired from his editorship of *The Nation*, More settled at Princeton, which until his death in 1937 continued to be his home. He became a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters. In 1913 he received the LL.D. degree from Washington University. He received the LL.D. degree from the University of Glasgow in 1931. Already he had received the Litt.D. degree from Columbia and from Dartmouth in 1917. He received the same degree from Princeton in 1919.

From 1904 to 1921 he was issuing the *Shelburne Essays*. There were eleven volumes in this massive series of critical studies. From 1917 to 1931 he was issuing the distinguished and commanding series of studies which bore the general title, *The Greek Tradition*. In 1927 he began to issue a new series of *Shelburne Essays*, three volumes of which reached the public. The little classic, *Pages from an Oxford Diary*, was published in 1937, and the preface was written only about two weeks before his death. It will become clear to us as we go on that few men have given a more full or adequate account of all the intellectual adventures in which they were involved than did Paul Elmer More. It will also become evident that his vast exploration covering the fashion in which men expressed their thoughts about life in many centuries and in many lands became an intellectual and moral and spiritual pilgrimage—not only the central experience of More himself, but a matter of the greatest importance to all those who eagerly desire to find the spot where the mind and the spirit may meet.

II

A few years ago I visited the small cottage near Shelburne in the Androscoggin Valley where for two years Paul Elmer More was something of a literary hermit. In these days of the automobile Mount Washington and other characteristic peaks of the White Mountains do not seem far away. But doubtless in the day of More's residence they were less easily accessible. The keeper of the inn at Shelburne remembered the days long ago when More used to come in from his cottage. The whole region has a quiet beauty, and one can easily understand how even in the present world More found it a place where beyond these voices there is peace. All sorts of things were moving about in his mind. He must have suspected that contradictory ideas and incompatible desires were responsible for a certain personal unrest. Winds from all about the world and all about the ages had swept in upon his thought. It is rather a dangerous thing to be as much of a cosmopolitan as he was becoming. It was necessary for him to become master of the big domain. So with his books and his pipe and his dog he spent days of brooding quiet and thought. He was coming to understand that the particular artistry which belongs to the critic was to be his life work. And he was finding his way as he worked at the *Shelburne Essays*.

From January until the end of May in 1924 I read the eleven volumes of which the *Shelburne Essays* originally consisted. I can still remember the thrill of that experience. Here was a writer who combined precision and charm. He knew how to lighten every subject he discussed with immediate interest. All the while you felt the subtle allurements of the drama of the mind. The author was a master of the genealogy of ideas. He followed them from country to country and from century to century like a criminal detective. He had a particular feeling for the New England in which so much of our own intellectual and aesthetic life had centered. He was easily at home in the great masterpieces of English literature. The many-sided and

evasive mind of India had revealed many things to him as he studied documents in Sanskrit. Greece had begun to be the home of his spirit, and Athens the city of his mind. He had a closer understanding of German thought than the choice of subjects in the *Shelburne Essays* would immediately indicate. And, of course, French critics like Sainte-Beuve were at his fingertips. He saw everything in terms of everything else, and he was all the while bringing to light more or less hidden and unsuspected relationships. In a sense which Stanton did not mean when he used the words of Lincoln, More belonged to the ages. And more and more the ages belonged to him.

In the *Shelburne Essays* you found a little university of eleven volumes. The sense that you were following a mind of sharp acumen in a great expedition which brought you in touch with all seminal ideas and with their most potent expression was a breath-taking experience. You could almost feel the muscles of your mind growing. You experienced a subtle pleasure as the antennae of your mind successfully reached out for something so delicately integrated that its very perception was an intellectual achievement. You did not wonder that More was being called the American Sainte-Beuve. You were ready to say that in him, in a very happy sense, the mind of America had come of age. All this was, of course, before it had become the fashion in America to go back to the jungle in order to attain maturity. But that is a later story.

In every way More vitalized his scholarship by making it the vehicle of a deeply personal experience. Very early he developed something not unlike a hatred for those deadening abstractions which so often fall with brutal weight upon the scholar's mind. Perhaps the very fact that with all his constantly growing and deepening learning he was in the new world, a little away from the old civilizations whose secrets he was so assiduously inspecting, gave to his thinking a certain perspective not quite possible to the men who are living at the very heart of the thing which they are judging. If he was not

bringing in the new world to redress the wrongs of the old, at least something in his own experience as a son of the American republic helped him to clarify thoughts which came to him from across the sea.

In respect of the great treasure of English literature which More knew so well, it had always been partly an advantage and partly a disadvantage to American scholars that they spoke in large degree the same language in which the old masterpieces were written. In an intimate fashion this made it possible for them to make their own the very riches of English literature. But there was a difference, sometimes very subtle and often easily missed. And the failure to see this and the tendency to regard them as, in some sense, intellectual colonials was something which before More's time men like Lowell had felt and resented. More was perhaps the first great American critic to meet English critics, not only on their own ground and quite level eyes, but also without the slightest sense of self-consciousness. And in his writing the whole body of English literature comes to stern, if quite friendly, judgment. He wears his cosmopolitan garments very confidently, and he has put aside easily enough all that is parochial and provincial. He is a well-qualified citizen of the whole republic of letters. But all the while he carries about a shrewd pair of American eyes.

With meticulous care More studies the American writers whom he considers in the *Shelburne Essays*. It is as a hermit of sorts that he writes his essay on Thoreau. The most recent biographer of Thoreau, Joseph Wood Krutch, has acknowledged that More was perhaps the first clearly to recognize in Thoreau "the creator of a new manner of writing about nature." But heartily as More enjoyed Thoreau and keen as was his scent for his significance, the two faced in different directions. More was to come back from his time of quiet and meditation and study to find his abiding interest in human experience. Thoreau became more at home in the world of nature than in the world of men.

Of Whittier More wrote with a certain delicacy of understanding, and of Longfellow with sharp, critical sagacity combined with gracious appreciation. They had traversed similar paths in making their own a cosmopolitan culture. But Longfellow had welcomed it to his heart, while More applied to it an almost acid intelligence.

Hawthorne he saw with eyes which followed him into the dark and melancholy ways of his lonely mind. Whenever he touched an American writer, it was with clear and close understanding of his background, his individual quality, and the actual nature of his achievement. The men who had made the world of learning their university he understood easily and happily.

Of Emerson he wrote at first with something not unlike embarrassment. Certain deep and abiding insights which Emerson received from Plato most deeply appealed to him. But he saw very early that Emerson sowed many seeds from which rather unlovely weeds grew. He was never an uncritical Emersonian. But his heart beat a little faster whenever he thought of the sage of Concord.

With Whitman the situation was different. The day of uncritical idolatry of Whitman was far off. The time when he received an honest day in court had scarcely come. It is very clear that More felt the true quality of a great poet again and again in Whitman. He even felt that in some ways he possessed a happiness in the use of words which Emerson had not attained. And he even found something richer in Whitman than the sustained urbanity of Emerson offered. Of course he saw the fallacy involved in Whitman's lawless brotherliness. The gregariousness which practically surrendered all standards for the sake of an affectionate embrace did not appeal to him. But he saw in Whitman a man capable of being taught by experience. And the sudden vistas of breath-taking beauty and the sudden flashes of real understanding he did not miss. Whitman's democracy without discipline, to be sure, left More cold. But he was able

to sense and to appreciate his vitality. And because he never thought of taking him as a teacher, he had no difficulty in appreciating the elements of greatness to be found in his writing.

When it came to William James, More's own critical sagacity met a sterner test with complete success. A philosophy based on change never stands still long enough to give you an opportunity to judge it. More saw that playing brilliantly with the flux is not a means for finding definite and permanent meanings. Confronted by conventions which have lost all vitality and a stability which is really the stability of death, we turn with a sense of great refreshment to the nimble and quick intelligence of William James. But he never gave us a world on which we can depend. He never gave us a truth which has any security. You must have found elements of changelessness in order to deal happily with change. This William James never understood. And this Paul Elmer More understood quite well. It marks the difference between a mind which moved with a quality like quicksilver and possessed an evanescent intelligence and a mind which has found insights which give it a certain quality of permanence.

There was a sense in which it was inevitable that More would make a homelike place for himself in English literature. And in the studies which come from this experience you always find two qualities. First there is meticulous scholarship. Then there is a veritable living over again of the experience out of which the writing has come. He studies the Elizabethan sonnets with their great dependence on Italian sources principally as a preparation for the study of the sonnets of Shakespeare, though he does recognize the distinction of certain lines such as Sidney's "Whatever fades, but fading pleasure brings." In Shakespeare we find the very pulse of a boundless vitality. In a subtle analysis of the sonnets More finds in Shakespeare the lustful desire of the cavalier combined with the searching moral consciousness of the puritan. There is hot experience and a cor-

roding consciousness, or a moral reaction not unlike shame, in the revealing lines. There is love which has not known the mastery of law, and a sharp consciousness of the way in which time betrays hopes so deep that it almost seems they must be fulfilled. You meet indulgence and remorse and a sense of beauty which inevitably reaches beyond the regions touched by the slime of life. That through such experiences Shakespeare moved to the tablelands of his loftiest thought and life is a matter of many-sided importance.

More can turn to the tortured ways of the mind of Cowper with its strange combination of sweet domestic scenes and hours on tragic crags of the spirit with a sure and understanding touch. He can become the very companion of the mind of such a Cambridge Platonist as George Herbert. He is at ease with the polished urbanity of my Lord Chesterfield, who found in taste his only religion and his only moral code, and learned sadly that he could not transmit his qualities of distinction to his son. He can follow the shrewd and cynical mind of Horace Walpole as he turns the ways of men to the uses of malicious irony and wins a certain kind of immortality by at least one sentence: "This world is a comedy to those that think, a tragedy to those that feel." He can follow in Gray's letters the ways of a world in which study is almost an end in itself and takes the place of the society which Walpole so mordantly describes. He can visit, if he does not quite inhabit, Blake's world of unleashed imagination where flashes of radiant insight dance about in something not unlike a chaos of illusion. He can watch Keats as he claims for his soul the serene beauty of a world in which his body never lived. He can find in Shelley the Greek grace and loveliness singularly divorced from the Greek discipline. He cannot touch Lamb without tenderness, but he does not allow his literary conscience to sleep even in dealing with the man who almost made debauchery saintly. Swift comes forth with all his deadly and corrosive irony carefully analyzed, if never quite understood. Pope unleashes a wit which has its own

fascination for More. He follows the ways of decadent wit with almost too much relish. Tennyson becomes the victim of a compromise which he sometimes gloriously transcends. Yeats creates a glamour which is not quite authentic. Christina Rossetti makes an unreal land of the spirit almost as real as reality itself. Walter Pater finds a discipline for magic which for a moment almost seems to take the place of the discipline of character itself. Poe almost makes mechanics take the place of vital insights. Scott gives his own imagination a gracious home in the Middle Ages. Shorthouse makes the courageous love of harmonious ways of thought and life at the heart of the cavalier almost as tremendous a virtue as those which sat with such grim splendor on the brows of the puritans. Swinbourne makes a code of rich lusciousness. Hood makes inarticulate despair the master of a voice. Dickens makes a world where the underprivileged may well make the privileged envious.

It is only when he comes to Robert Browning that More's urbanity quite fails him, and he does not seriously consider what he might see if he looked through eyes other than those of his prejudices. One remembers the story of a distinguished professor of English literature who had looked at Browning much as did More. But one night, with several hours of freedom before him, he gave himself to the reading of "Pompilia" in *The Ring and the Book*. At last its startling beauty and understanding mastered him. He never spoke scornfully of Browning again. Of course, there is deserved acid in some of More's strictures of Browning. But he misses his secret. He never gets at the heart of his mystery.

The meeting of literature and religion was always of engrossing interest to Paul Elmer More. He comes to Francis Thompson with a half-disturbed, half-eager mind. At the time when this essay was written, he was too far from evangelical religion to feel the full power of *The Hound of Heaven*. He does feel the combined beauty and spiritual power of the thought of the ladder of which Jacob dreamed, found now between heaven and

Charing Cross. When he comes to Cardinal Newman, whose spiritual pilgrimage so strangely resembles and yet is so distinctively different from his own, he follows the subtle paths of Newman's mighty and disturbed mind with patient eagerness. If he finds a crack in this piece of the finest and loveliest china, it is with no attempt to disguise his sadness and his admiration that he announces his verdict. That he had traveled far from his own romantic days is made clear as we see that he finds even the cynical but honest realism of Byron less disturbing than the pantheistic reverie of Wordsworth.

More's long and intimate study of Indian thought was sure to be brought under tribute in the *Shelburne Essays*. He felt an allurements which might easily have made him uncritical as he studied characteristic utterances of the Forest Philosophy of India. Very much to his credit be it said that he never succumbed to the disintegrating monism in Indian thought which made the pantheism of the all at last have a value very like nothing. But when he wrote of the *Bhagavad Gita*, he did not treat the whole work as it has uttered its voice in India. He confined himself to what he conceived to be the earlier and authentic part, which enabled him to find the very distinctions he was beginning to prize more than anything else in the world and to escape the relativity which makes the whole poem so characteristic of the typical ways of Indian thought.

Coming to criticism, More made Matthew Arnold the object of the most intense and critical attention. His own sense of literary continuity was becoming surer all the while, and he saw Arnold belonging to a line of critics which went back to the spacious and urbane and so often very penetrating thought of Cicero. He saw the line continuing until he came to Erasmus and Boileau. In it he found Shaftesbury and Sainte-Beuve. And then he came to the author of *Culture and Anarchy*. It is an odd and interesting thing that while both Babbitt and More always speak of Erasmus with the profoundest respect and implicit approval, you can go through all their

books without finding a full-dress discussion of the great Dutch humanist. More is ready to prophesy that there is more sanity, breadth, and permanence in the criticism of Arnold than in the heightened artistic enthusiasms of Ruskin, the flaming speech of Carlyle, or the scientific fundamentalism of Huxley. And incidentally, More, while always writing with full respect of the achievements of science in its own field, was little less than scornful of the pseudo science which became a sort of materialistic philosophy. More is eager to distinguish criticism of the true type from the distinguished epicureanism of Pater and untamed gregariousness of Oscar Wilde. He fears that on one side the thought of Arnold may have tended to encourage the sort of thing they did. Really Arnold wanted to inherit the best that had been thought and said in the world; Wilde wanted uncritically to imbibe every drink which had been concocted in the past. The deliberate creation of the present out of the best of the past represented something in which the minds of More and Arnold could happily meet.

The more one studies the *Shelburne Essays*, the deeper becomes the sense that in them the author is not only conducting a vast adventure among the masterpieces in a sense quite different from that meant by Anatole France, but he is all the while seeking to find his own way. He is re-creating the past for the sake of making his own mind. And among the elements to be brought together in his later thinking none is more important than that which had to do with Greek thought and culture, and very definitely with Plato. Of this we will have more to say when we come to the great work on the Greek tradition. We must now say something of the influence of Greek thought upon his mind at the time when he was writing the *Shelburne Essays*. In his first discussion of the sort he frankly admits, and even asserts, that the ethical emphasis of Greek literature is fundamental, and he connects this with the constantly emphasized doctrine of moderation and with the quest for true knowledge of meaning of one's own life and of

human life. In another essay he deals with the nemesis which does its work with men when they discard the laws of moderation and disdain the true human limits of thought and life.

When he comes to deal with Socrates, we feel that his mind begins to kindle. The figure we meet in the memories of Xenophon is not one which represents a power to change the thoughts and lives of men. He has seen the sight of Socrates, but he lacks the insight which sees his deepest meaning. It is the genius of Plato which has given Socrates to the world. And so to Plato we must go. You see the homely, arresting figure of Socrates. You watch the play of the famous Socratic irony in endless conversations. You begin to see what he means by declaring that he knows what he does not know. You begin to see what the examined mind, the examined thought, and the examined life mean to him. You sense his profound belief in a virtue whose meaning can be discovered. You observe what More scarcely sees to be his great failure in identifying knowledge and virtue. You begin to apprehend the meaning of that inner check in which something which is deepest in the Greek spirit becomes effective in him. You follow the whole of the great defense as Plato set it forth in the *Apology*. You see a man risk everything—and finally give his life—for the sake of the true pursuit of the understanding of the meaning of that which is indeed so good and beautiful and true. You sense a moral grandeur which was completely capturing the mind and the imagination of More. You follow Plato into that realm of ideas in which truth and beauty and goodness are seen as permanent realities completely beyond the realms of change. At last More is sighting through Plato those permanent distinctions for which he had consciously and unconsciously been seeking so long.

There are many men whose appearance in Europe captures More's fascinated attention. The very enticing mind of Pascal comes near to finding More off guard. It was at last a cruel God whom Pascal worshiped; and gracious richness of inner

life ought not to lead one to pass from admiration of the author to a palliation of divine injustice. More seems almost gratified that Pascal never quite frankly or thoroughly faced the ultimate problems. More sees in Tolstoy an arresting and important figure. The world has turned to ashes on his lips. But it is the letter rather than the spirit of the gospel which masters him. He has no real solution to the problem of the tensions between thought and art. He dramatizes a problem. He scarcely presents a solution. Nietzsche comes into the range of More when the author of the *Shelburne Essays* is feeling the full tide of his reaction from sentimental and uncritical altruism. And so he is oddly patient with the hard brutality of the thought of Nietzsche. Even when he is analyzing a hardness which turns to madness, More cannot forget that the man who poisoned the thought of Germany was at least not a sentimental humanitarian. For all the while in the mind of More the contrast between humanism and humanitarianism is sharpening. The contrast had been very clear to Babbitt. And Babbitt may have had something to do with sharpening the mind of More to a fine point of discrimination. The humanitarian lets the law of kindness replace the law of discipline. And his sentimental kindness is likely to set going a rotting process which will move through his whole life and the lives of all those to whom his influence comes. Altruism without discipline is surely a bad thing. Did More see with complete clarity the possibilities of an altruism which submitted itself to discipline? He saw clearly enough that inner discipline must be the very heart of the good life, and that the individual who blames society for his own faults is taking a fatally wrong path. This was the central fault of the thinking of Rousseau. And so Rousseau rejected civilization and created a dreamworld of nature out of the resources of his own imagination. His surrender to impulse involves the very contradiction of the good life. So what contained sound elements of repudiation of a life of hard artificiality finally made a sort of religion of impulse which recognized the mastery of no

discipline and saw the necessity of no power of moral control.

By this time it was thoroughly clear to More that everything to be prized in life depended upon the firm structure of great distinctions which gave the only true and abiding meaning to experience. But if you are to have permanent distinctions, you cannot reduce life to a unity in which these very distinctly vanish. So in this sense your basic thought about life must be dualistic and not monistic. And your thinking must not find a refuge in vast abstractions which seemed to pay tribute to meaning at the very moment when true meaning was lost.

The whole study of human thought and experience as set forth in the varied and searching studies of the *Shelburne Essays* moved toward certain notable conclusions. Great principles emerged to which one must be loyal at whatever cost. Great systems of thought, which at last emasculated the very life they were trying to interpret, began to be seen in their true quality. Not even reason itself must be allowed to commit suicide. And the use of reason to rob life of its truest meaning must be repudiated. It will be repudiated if it is seen for what it is. More saw these things at every turn in the literature and the philosophy of the world. And he began to feel that he was standing on very solid ground. The man of letters found that he was living at the place where literature and philosophy met. His literary interests all the while kept intensely alive his sense of concrete human situations and concrete human problems. His very method had something to do with saving him from the fallacies of brilliant abstraction. The place of Plato's *Apology* in the *Shelburne Essays* has not always been truly seen. There insights arose in the very experience of a living man. There philosophy met life as a transcendently moral experience. As Plato worked out the implications of the vast processes which with him, too, had Socrates at their heart, it almost seemed as if philosophy might do the work which had been so often assigned to religion. There was a time when More felt that, having found Plato, he did not need to go farther.

It is important to see that at the heart of More's intellectual biography is a tale of listening to all the human voices. They must all be heard. They must all be analyzed. They must all be appraised. And in the whole process the sense of deathless distinctions will emerge.

III

It became increasingly clear to More that he was to find his way through a close study of Plato and the Greek tradition. There were two periods in his thought of these matters. In the first he was inclined to believe that he would find everything he needed in the use of what he found in Plato as it could be applied to all the problems which commanded his interest. In the second period he had come to believe that the central positions of Plato led on naturally to that which found fulfillment in the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation. Both of these positions are in turn reflected in the commanding series of volumes on *The Greek Tradition*. It was the reflection of the mind of a man on a journey. More's mind was never static. Indeed, it is clear enough that had he lived longer, there would have been other stages in his journey. But his changes were never haphazard. They never represented the brilliant but irresponsible movement of a mind which landed at last in some doctrine of implied relativity. More was following a very definite and secure logic which worked from within his mind and his experience. And when you know the whole story, it fits together with singular coherence and, one may add, with singular harmony.

In the volume on *Platonism* More builds everything about three positions which he believes to have been defining for Socrates. There is a keen and healthy skepticism. There is a positive and unhesitating assertion of a certain core of spiritual truth. And there is an unhesitating and complete identification of virtue and knowledge. More never quite faced the fallacy of the third position. Of course you must have knowledge to have virtue. But you may have knowledge and yet not be virtu-

ous. More is not quite unaware of the problem this situation produces. And when he discusses it, he writes with some uneasiness.

More is sure that the Socratic skepticism, which of course also represents the position of Plato, can be reconciled with certain great spiritual affirmations. He follows the Platonic Socrates through many a discussion in which the skeptical irony clears the way, moving gradually but inevitably to the spiritual affirmation.

More believes that a fundamental distinction between happiness and pleasure is at the very heart of all the Platonic discussions. True happiness rests on goodness. Pleasure may be without any sound ethical foundation. By what one might call the straight gaze, which More thinks of as a direct intuition of the mind, the finality of that goodness which is central to everything else is seen after honest skepticism has done its worst. Goodness may be thought of in terms of justice, as is true in the *Republic*. But always there is the sense coming directly from moral experience of an ethical truth which will not brook denial. There is, of course, opinion. And there is knowledge. If there is to be true knowledge, there must be a world of ultimate moral reality which confirms the moral intuitions of actual experience. Here we come upon Plato's doctrine of Ideas. It is as we enter into the meaning of the timeless and secure ideas that we move from the realm of opinion into the realm of some sort of secure knowledge. The moral security of our deepest intuitions in the ultimate universe is secured through the doctrine of Ideas. It is in the realm of experience, where the Ideas become commanding in our thought and experience, that we find the basis of moral action and security in the midst of all the confusions of opinion. More likes to use the word imagination, which Plato did not use, to express the fashion in which the ideas are made real in experience. So they become images in our minds. But these images are based upon something ultimately real. There is a lower imagination which would confuse all the

issues. But the higher imagination gives a vivid actuality in experience to that which exists in the ultimate universe in its own right. The use of myth by Plato is a fine example of the higher imagination at work. The allegory of the cave brings great truths within the reach of our immediate apprehension. The Platonic philosophy, when it turned to regions which we would ascribe to the domain of science, recognized but transcended the aspects of mathematical relationship. Mechanical interaction is present. But something transcending mechanical action is present, too. We can see—perhaps better than More saw—that with not quite adequate implements Plato was trying to maintain the sense of a world where the order one found in mathematics was a party of a larger world presided over by free purpose. The myths of Plato often go beyond his logic. When he turns to the vision which the imagination makes possible, as in the *Timaëus*, one must watch for these larger insights.

More sees Plato turning from a metaphysics which would make abstraction absolute. And since More chooses to use the word metaphysics for the pursuit of logic to regions beyond the competence of logic it seems that he is condemning metaphysics altogether. He never quite saw the possible of a process of metaphysical thought which would be free from the destructive elements which he so rightly repudiated. So he finds Plato at last using true skepticism to destroy all sorts of fallacies, and saving himself from complete and devastating skepticism through a spiritual affirmation based upon an experience so fundamental and self-justifying that the objections of formal logic cannot touch it. In all this discussion More moves from dialogue to dialogue with a combination of clarity and vitality which commands the hearty admiration of the reader. And he finds in Plato something which corresponds to his own deepest experience. For he, too, is learning with consummate power to use skepticism to clear away obstacles. And he, too, is finding security in the intuitions which come from a direct gaze at authentic moral experience.

Paul Elmer More regarded the volume *Platonism* as an introduction to the series on *The Greek Tradition*. So the volume on *The Religion of Plato* is considered Volume I after this introduction. When he wrote *The Religion of Plato*, More moved forward; but he had not wholly reached his final position. By this time, however, he held securely to the conviction that there is a straight line from Plato through St. Chrysostom to the Council of Chalcedon at the middle of the fifth century. And he studies the religion of Plato with this consummation in mind. It is not, of course, that Plato foresaw this consummation, but that the very meaning central to his thought found its only real fulfillment in Christianity. The attempt in the *Republic* to show that, whatever happens to a man, the life of justice is better than the life of injustice, begins to move in those deeper regions where morals inevitably meet religion.

It is in the *Laws* that the religious position becomes possessing and compelling. The skeptical irony has brushed aside encumbrances and made the way for the spiritual affirmation. And the spiritual affirmation involves a faith which is only fully authenticated in the experience which comes with belief in the maker and ruler of the world. Plato has no doubt about the personal nature of the Deity. And More is convinced that he has no doubt about personal immortality. God envies no one. He wants good for all. He wants to make the best possible world and the best possible men in the world. He has to make the best of a certain resistance in the nature of the materials with which he works. But the source of evil is never to be found in him or in his will.

It seems at times that Plato can be curiously comfortable in the presence of myths about the gods. But he is aflame at once in the presence of any suggestion which reflects upon the essential goodness of the dwellers on Olympus. In fact, in his deepest moods one feels that it is always more natural for him to say God than gods. More feels happy, it seems, in the conviction that the Ideas are never made a part of the divine

life. God creates and rules according to their behests. But More thinks that Plato never found their source in God. This would savor too much of the monism to which More is unutterably hostile, and in which he believes that he reflects the attitude of his Master. More must have a living God who rules according to the behests of justice. So he believes it was with Plato.

There is a selfish tendency in man which conflicts with his sense of the overlordship of justice in his own life and in the life of the universe. More sees, and he believes that Plato sees, the place of choice. But he follows so closely Plato's identification of knowledge and virtue that he moves with something less than his usual ease. The truth is that at this point Plato himself never quite achieved clarity or true harmony of thought. And More does not transcend the limitations of Plato. But he does find, and triumphantly does he assert, the living quality of the Deity and the reign of goodness in the life of God. So man's deepest intuitions find their foundation and their confirmation in the ultimate life of the universe. And living in this faith, men move from philosophy into religion. Or perhaps it is best to say philosophy becomes religion. If by metaphysics you mean a view of reality, More follows Plato into profoundly metaphysical regions in all this argument. But More saves the word metaphysics for the particular form of thought about reality which he quite rightly repudiated. And so there is many a castigation of metaphysics in this volume. Moving through one dialogue after another, however, More finds the structural roots of religion in Plato. And it is a religion which comes to its true consummation in a Christianity which Plato could not foresee.

In the second volume of *The Greek Tradition*, which bears the title *Hellenistic Philosophies*, More turns his attention to those positions which had a real connection with the Platonic Socrates, but which actually corrupted and betrayed his true position. The philosophy of pleasure connected always with the

name of Epicurus comes to be a fairly complete denial of that which Plato received from his master and carried on in fuller and ampler fashion. The mechanical universe of Epicurus leaves no real room for freedom or purpose, and he tries to bring freedom in by a contradiction of his own essential positions. He has no standard by which pleasure is judged, and so, though his own life was gracious and urbane, he can bring no real judgment against those who make his principles the basis for pleasures in which he would not have indulged. When he does criticize pleasure, it is in the name of the pain which excess may bring. And so life tends to become colorless through a fear of the revenge of too-heightened pleasure. The happiness which the Platonic Socrates saw under the rule of that which is higher than itself, Epicurus never apprehended or understood. He made the gods powerless lest they misuse their power. He never saw that if goodness is alive in the Deity, there will be no divine cruelty and no desire to use power in such a fashion as to bring injustice to the lives of men. For the satisfaction of a happiness which comes when the whole life is commanded by the good, he was able to offer only something which at last came to little more than the absence of pain. Epicurus was often right in what he hated. He was never able to find a true basis for that which at his best he really loved. When you study the warm and gracious life of Epicurus with its fine feeling for friendship and its quiet urbanity, you see many virtues growing without adequate roots. And without roots even virtues have a way of coming upon death.

The Stoics, too, failed to find a solid basis for the very virtue which they so valued. They lived, as they believed, in a completely determined universe, and so they were always in effect asking men to use a freedom which they did not possess in order to attain a virtue impossible in a determined world. The stable order of nature delighted them, and in asking men to live according to nature they were asking them to conform their lives to a pattern where law took the place of lawlessness. At one

extreme Stoicism became hard with an ugly and impersonal rigidity. In the other direction it developed something so rich and radiant that we find it hard to see how it grew from the honest roots of this philosophy. The sense of the whole human fellowship and of the gracious city which is the home of a man's true spirit is achieved by contradicting the essential positions of Stoicism itself. And the sense of warm hearts turned in worship to the divine source of all indicates a deep movement unblushingly indifferent to inconsistency. More is fascinated by Epictetus, and gives many pages to the exposition of the significance of his teaching. But the security which Stoicism offered had no true freedom, and so the mechanical tended to triumph at last. So the moral intuition of the Platonic Socrates is divorced from that which gives it validity and the promise of permanence.

If Epicureanism represented a rootless pleasure and Stoicism represented a rootless virtue, the Neoplatonism of Plotinus tended to lose itself in a pantheistic monism in which all true distinctions at last were lost. More is sharp enough in his criticism when he indicates that Plato has no thought of a mystical vision, in which the one who sees and that which is seen are united in a contemplation where there is really nothing to contemplate. Of course, in such a pantheistic monism it is quite impossible to give an account of evil which possesses a true ethical quality. And the Plotinian ecstasy, when closely analyzed, has a quality of pseudo spirituality. As More suggests, there is usually a lack of mental or moral or physical or spiritual health—a kind of taint—about this sort of mysticism. The clear fashion in which, after the closest study, More points out the excesses of Neoplatonism saves both him and the reader who follows him from much confusion. At moments in his desire to be fair he seems inclined to be a little too kind. But he came out clearly with penetrating criticism at last.

The final breakdown of Hellenistic philosophy in corrosive criticism More regards as a matter of the utmost importance. More discusses with the deepest interest many skeptics, and is

most of all impressed by Sextus Empiricus. He believes that once and for all they broke down any logic which would evolve into a metaphysic by showing with brilliant conclusiveness the contradictions involved in the whole process. That there is a good deal of truth in this in respect of what we may call pseudo metaphysics we would not wish to deny. But More scarcely faces the fashion in which the skeptics always depended upon reason in conducting their attack on reason. They found it necessary again and again to assume implicitly what they explicitly denied. And they, and indeed More, always depended upon logic in every important criticism. If More had been more skeptical of skepticism, his work at this point would be sounder. He thinks he is clearing the way for a truly Platonic position where skepticism is combined with dependence upon the deep apprehensions of moral intuition. As a matter of fact, he comes dangerously near to accepting position which would deny to reason the very uses to which he feels it necessary to apply it. He did not quite see that he was bringing a wooden horse into the streets of Troy. Sextus Empiricus is a dangerous friend, for he, too, betrayed that which would give permanence to the tradition of the Platonic Socrates.

One suspects that Socrates himself would have seen this quickly enough. One likes to fancy a dialogue in which the Platonic Socrates would subject Sextus Empiricus to the Socratic irony. The truth is that there is a formal logic which, like that depicted in Holmes's famous "One-Hoss Shay," leads to intellectual confusion. And there is a true logic which is of the very genius of the good use of the reason. Greek skepticism did not serve the cause of truth by attacking both. And there is a true metaphysics which is not actually touched even by the cleverest gibes of More. Indeed, he made so many advances to positions which he had once questioned that one wonders what might have happened if he had lived long enough to continue his great intellectual pilgrimage. Might he not have made the personality in which he so deeply believed central and defining in a theory of reality

which would have placed many things in a different perspective? The true use of skepticism is for the sake of attack on false logic and pseudo logic in the name of a true logic which accepts and uses the deepest intuitions of the moral and spiritual life.

Paul Elmer More has now achieved a hard core of skepticism, especially in respect of those abstractions which are made absolutes and called a final metaphysic. He has complete respect for those facts in the physical realm which are the basis of the true work of physical science. Again, he is completely skeptical when the facts of physical science, by what he regards as a completely unjustified process of generalization, are turned into a materialistic philosophy. He has complete respect for another series of facts belonging to the moral and spiritual realm which he regards as beyond the reach of legitimate skepticism. This combination of attitudes and convictions he regards as the inevitable outcome of an understanding study of the philosophy of Plato.

We see how far he has traveled when we follow the argument of the third volume of *The Greek Tradition*, which bears the title *The Christ of the New Testament*. He states the goal of the intellectual journey clearly at the very start. At Nicaea in A.D. 325 the central position of the Christian faith was put into set form. At Chalcedon in A.D. 451 it was stated even more sharply and unmistakably. You can put it all into a sentence. The Christian was a man who believed that the full quality of divinity and the full quality of humanity were united in Christ. There is a spiritual dualism here which is essential to the full Christian position. In this he sees the fulfillment of the central movement of the thought of Plato. In the religious experience of Israel he sees the preparation for this position. He moves into Old Testament scholarship working with firm hands. In Hebrew prophecy he sees the movement toward Christ in full force. And the heart of his thought is the sort of spiritual affirmation which technical scholarship can clarify but cannot deny.

Coming to the New Testament, he is all the while making a

distinction between the German scholarship whose main results he accepts and the German philosophy which he rejects. You can be a higher critic without reducing Christianity to humanitarian terms. The Gospels give us a certain security as we think of the valid moral experience of Jesus, and of the victory over temptation which accompanied the gradually increasing clarification of his own sense of his mission. With a certain delicate simplicity More writes of the teaching of Jesus. His own vast erudition is back of his simplicity, but it is in no way visible. He is in touch with something too great for any display of learning and too deeply penetrating for any deftly coined phrase. The making real of the claims of the rule of God, and in the light of a clear, pure vision the making inevitable of repentance—these things you observe. The teaching that self-control should begin with the imagination, the humility which leaves a place for the thought of others, the love which is able to make the experience of others real—these and many other facets of the most living of all words become limpid with light as More touches them. And we see not only how the words became alive, but also how they became full of authority. The wise and tender fashion in which the Teacher so led the men nearest to him that one of them could tell him what he was most anxious to tell them is set forth so that in a way you see it all happen. The great loyalty and the last agony find for themselves a few restrained and right words.

More scarcely penetrated to the depths of Paul. But you do see Paul mastered by the great master. You do see him making the victory of Christ his own and calling men to follow him in that deed. You do get a glimpse of his great vision of faith which works through love. You enter the highway of the fourth Gospel. There More finds golden words for which you can only account by thinking of Christ. The sense of the divine quality of Christ lives in almost every phrase of the book. And you come at the last, rather than at the beginning, to the prologue where separate

insights are gathered into such a final unity. All the while you are being prepared for the last leap of faith where you, too, can say: the Son of God. With a deep awe More comes to the great and unparalleled words, Come unto me. They are quite right, coming from the lips of the one you have met in the Gospels.

Then there is the Resurrection. The problem is not really to account for it, though More pays the respect of recital to various possible and impossible views. The real problem would be found if we tried to account for the triumphant faith of the friends of Jesus in the man who had died upon the cross. Only the fact that they knew that death did not hold him makes that credible. Faith in the Man in whom they met God came to the disciples out of experience. And the deepest experience of the race finds its fulfillment in just this faith. What seems an outreached hand in Plato finds a hand to clasp in the Man of the Incarnation. And indeed, when we think deeply enough, we realize that the Christian religion itself lives or dies according as men accept or reject the mighty belief in the Word made flesh.

In the volume *Christ the Word* More sees the Christian Church becoming fully aware of the meaning and the implications of its central assertion, and at last setting it forth with a certain authority and finality. The central message of Christianity comes with the authority of revelation. Philosophy has the persuasiveness at its best of an understanding human voice. As Justin Martyr put it: "The whole rational principle of the universe became for our sakes manifest in Christ."

As the Christians make their own in experience what has come to them in revelation, as the Epistle to Diognetus puts it, they become to the world what the soul is to the body. With brilliant skill More follows Christianity as it finds its way through many confusions of thought. Gnosticism with a false dualism produces a situation where asceticism becomes exaggerated or licentiousness becomes completely gross. Superstition coming from those

who had been entangled in pagan ways of thought and life was constantly lifting its head and had to be met with critical understanding and decisive repudiation.

More pays eager attention to Clement and Origen. Clement contends that when Christ said "I am the truth," the problem raised by the consideration of the relation of ideas to phenomena was at last solved. Origen made a rich and fruitful attempt as a Christian to inspect the complete circuit of human knowledge. The vast web of his allegory lends itself to intellectual and moral confusion. And, with all the fruitfulness of his thought, he was too much influenced by the very Gnostics whom he fought.

But Christianity had to meet foes within as well as foes without. The Sabellians held to the unity of God in such a fashion that a real Incarnation was impossible. The Arians lowered the position of the Logos so as to make the Incarnation equally impossible. At Nicaea the two heresies were repudiated. The Logos was God, and, though distinct from the Father, was yet a part of the completely divine life. By the time of the meeting of the church at Chalcedon the Nestorians were asserting that there were two persons united in Jesus. And the Monophysites were asserting one nature in such a way as to deny the humanity of Christ. Chalcedon declared that Christ was one person of two natures.

With infinite patience More goes through the involved controversies, achieving a clarity of statement and a vitality of presentation both of which are welcome to the reader. It is fascinating to see the one-time skeptic moving with such assurance within the structure of the thought of the Church. By the time the word of Chalcedon had been sent forth, the Church had met obsessions to the right and obsessions to the left. In a sense it had found a *via media* which avoided the errors of extreme positions and achieved a centrality which protected the great truth upon which Christianity must depend if it was to continue to exist.

But this climax of Christian thought was also the very con-

summation of the Greek tradition. When one thinks with completely critical honesty, one must admit that Plato did not quite frankly or fully meet the problem of the unjust suffering of the just man in the *Republic*. The problem is met by the full Christian doctrine of immortality. Indeed, in every way the deepest spiritual intuitions of Plato find fulfillment in the Christian faith. Christ the Word answers the questions which in a sense were left hanging in the air by the Platonic philosophy. For instance, when the ethical ideas of Plato are made personal in the Logos, you have a fulfillment and completion of the deepest ethical life. In various ways More follows out this consummation and completion. And at last he comes to the purpose of God fully expressed by Jesus which gathers together the deepest things in the Greek tradition and makes them secure for the intellectual and moral and spiritual life of man.

All the while More continues his brilliant campaign against a false metaphysics which he rather confuses with having any metaphysics at all. But the actual things which he is fighting deserve castigation. And so his thinking has central elements of dependability even when it is incomplete.

Thus moving along intellectual lines with his intellectual activity kept in the deepest relation to broad human experience, Paul Elmer More became a Christian. And he became an Anglican. The Anglican aspects of his intellectual life are set forth from various angles in the volume *The Catholic Faith*, a complementary volume to the four volumes devoted to *The Greek Tradition*. But perhaps the best introduction to his general position at this time is found in his essay *The Spirit of Anglicanism*, which is the introductory chapter of the volume *Anglicanism* which deals with the thought and practice of the church of England, illustrated from the religious literature of the seventeenth century.

As we have followed the thought of More, we have seen once and again how eagerly he has always sought for a central position which would contain the truth and avoid the excesses of opposite

extremes. So we can very well understand how the *via media* of Anglican thought would appeal to something at the very center of his intellectual life. He confesses that there were political aspects to the *via media* at first. But he insists that it soon moved to deeper levels. There was a clear attempt to find a middle position between the excesses of Rome on the one hand and the excesses of Protestant thought on the other. Men are always betrayed when they make one half of the truth an absolute and ignore the other half. To More Anglican thought comes to a consummation in a doctrine of the eucharist based upon the conviction that as the Word became flesh in the Incarnation, so in a sense the flesh becomes the Word in the greatest of the sacraments.

Turning now to the volume *The Catholic Faith*, we find that More makes a searching study of the Apostles' Creed. In this creed he believes the central assertions to be unequivocally true. He admits the presence of statements back of whose metaphorical language there is a truth to which we can give unhesitating assent. There is a learned and sympathetic study of the eucharistic sacrament. His thought in this discussion is firmly based upon the Platonic position that the material can be turned with conscious purpose to spiritual ends. In the eucharist the Platonic faith that the material can be made the vehicle of the spiritual is joined with that sacrifice which God in Christ made on the cross for the saving of men, and which the eucharist perpetually represents. In considering the vast and age-long ministry of the Church, More expresses the conviction that in a world where the inerrant expression of truth is impossible, neither the Bible alone nor the Church alone can give all that is necessary, but that together they offer the basis for firm and secure conviction.

There is a very searching study of Christian mysticism. More confesses that he began his study of mysticism in Sanskrit and Pali writings, quite ready to be a disciple. But long study and familiarity brought a feeling of alienation. The truth is that the mystic, even when he calls himself a Christian mystic, is not

traveling on the Christian highway of salvation. The true union of the Christian soul with God is not the identification of the soul with God demanded by the mystics. There is no basis in the New Testament for identifying the soul with God. Augustine was kept by his stout theism from following Plotinus the whole of the Plotinian way. There is a spiritual philandering in some of the great mystics who bear the name Christian which has no kinship with the real Christian experiences reflected in the New Testament. A thoroughgoing mysticism really leaves no place for the Incarnation. We are not at all surprised to find that Rome has been sagacious enough to look with some suspicion upon those of her sons who have walked in the mystical path to sainthood. So in one of the most acute studies he ever wrote More comes to the conclusion that mysticism is a disease of religion.

The volume on *The Catholic Faith* contains a discussion of Buddhism and Christianity which is scarcely so critical as the study of mysticism. By associating the excesses of Buddhist thought with its later forms and seeing the earlier expressions without a profound enough study of the tendencies implicit even in the earliest remains of Buddhist teaching, More persuades himself that it is almost possible to think of Buddhism as a kind of unconscious prelude to the gospel.

It is always necessary to remember that the long and varied story of the thought of Paul Elmer More is the tale of a real mind encountering all of the vicissitudes of a real experience. And as we think of the almost incredible complexity of the vast jungles of thought through which he passed, our actual astonishment is that he kept his sense of direction so securely.

IV

The eleventh and final volume of the first group of the *Shelburne Essays* was published in 1912. The first volume of the *New Shelburne Essays*, which bore the title *The Demon of the Absolute*, was published in 1928. During the years between, More

had been engaged in studies whose fruit appeared in various volumes of *The Greek Tradition*. The gulf between the classical criticism and the hot and energetic criticism of the flux had been widening constantly. The sort of attack on More which was characterized by intense feelings of hostility rather than by accuracy or critical acumen had become virulent enough. The first volume of the *New Shelburne Essays* is a fighting document. With a sort of chuckling urbanity More quotes some of the fantastic and violent attacks to which he had been subjected. The blows he struck in return were completely devastating to anyone who was intelligent enough to feel their full force.

Nothing was farther from More's mind, however, than merely to indulge in effective sword play. *The Demon of the Absolute*, the first long essay in the volume bearing the same name, is a closely reasoned discussion of what happens when reason runs amuck. The essay deals with the profound bases of most of the positions which led to the emerging of the literary products and the criticism to which More was most opposed. When temperament is made an absolute, there is no basis for standards either in literature or in criticism. And there is no basis for a true appreciation of the noblest tradition. Tradition still abides. But when temperament is made an absolute, men will no more go to tradition for sound criteria. Pure art may be made an absolute. And so, in the long run, art loses the very capacity for significant meaning. Pure science may be made an absolute. And science itself comes to be described in terms which are completely apart from its legitimate achievements and which lead to the futility of abstractions which come very near to being words without content. The discussion is conducted with copious references to many writers, and Croce and Whitehead come in for searching discussion. It becomes very clear that whenever one principle takes the bit into its teeth and runs off to be an absolute, there are not only bad days but days of complete futility ahead.

The essay on *Modern Currents* clearly established the contrast

between the literature of the flux and the literature based upon deep, if sometimes implicit, standards. One of the most delightful essays in this volume describes the author's debt to Trollope. The writings of Trollope show how an author can have a moral purpose without having a self-consciously moral method. It is simply true that aesthetics and ethics meet in living experience, and they must meet in any true portrayal and interpretation of experience. There is a sense of certain living integrities which belong to civilization back of all the writings of Trollope. Time teaches its own long lessons, and of these Trollope was not unaware. Trollope wrote to give his readers pleasure. But he wanted to serve their real interest at the very moment when he was giving them enjoyment. And this is precisely what he was able to do.

More's study of George Barrow shows with what sympathy and understanding he could treat a writer who might seem completely foreign to what was most characteristic of his own thought. And he can write not without tenderness of Henry Vaughan who saw eternity one night, and who borrowed the phrase "bright shoots of everlastingness" in such a fashion as to make it immortal. More can see the merits of clear and effective criticism in Poe without failing to see the strange qualities of morbidity which suffused his mind, and also without failing to see that in Poe morbidity never produces writing which is mastered by that ethical morbidity which leads to adventures in slime. An old Indian tale, a bit of fruit from More's study of Sanskrit, concludes the volume. It is colored by a fine sense of a life which built its meaning on something outside its own selfish desires.

In this volume More shows himself amazingly well-read in the literature which he dislikes. He does not condemn his foes unheard. And he discovers what they are about and usually finds something to appreciate before he comes to that which he is convinced he must condemn.

The second volume of the *New Shelburne Essays* bears the

title *The Sceptical Approach to Religion*. The material contained in this volume was prepared for use in lectures at the Lowell Institute in Boston and at the University of Cincinnati. These essays were published in 1934 within three years of More's death. They attempt to put into systematic form, and as simply as may be, the positions More had reached in matters having to do especially with philosophy and religion. There is a study of what he had gained from his long pursuit of the Platonic Socrates and the Platonic philosophy. There is a study of the movement of Hebrew faith toward the Christian consummation. There is an insistent presentation of teleological positions consummating in the teleology of Christianity. And there is a final expression of a hope which an honestly skeptical approach leaves untouched.

More is profoundly concerned with a skepticism which becomes skeptical of the too-great claims of reason itself. He sees that a reason whose only consummation is an abstract metaphysics is doomed to come upon frustration. And so much impressed is he by the ultimate frustration implicit in all abstract metaphysics that he turns from the uses of reason in this fashion to find man at last intellectually impotent. But the whole history of moral intuitions from the time of Socrates and Plato will not be put down and shows man to be morally responsible. Reason which does not try to deal with absolutes can do much effective work and, when revelation comes, can see endless connections which add to its power to master the mind of man. The skeptic sees clearly enough at last that you must have a universe with a purpose or life becomes meaningless. And since a purpose requires a person, the skeptic sees at last that only through such a revelation as is claimed by the Hebrew and Christian tradition can our thought of life be saved from falling apart. So true skepticism stands at last with receptive friendliness at the gateway of faith. And all this is the final consummation of what began as an acceptance of the Socratic skepticism and the Socratic

faith in the moral insights. More has made a great port as the result of a great journey.

One likes to believe that had he lived longer, he who had made so many changes in his thinking as his life and his perceptions deepened might have made others. There is evidence that as his grasp on teleological principles deepened he came to have, in a measure at least, a more friendly attitude toward Aristotle. His bitter hostility to what he thought was the not quite honest relativity of the philosophy of Kant perhaps prevented his seeing the subtle relation between Kant's central position in the *Critique of Practical Reason* and his own arrival at positions which did not depend upon the logical use of the reason for their foundation. Actually More never fully analyzed the relation between formal logic and a deeper use of the reason. And he never really faced the fact that the inadequacy of the metaphysical systems to which he was so hostile did not preclude the possibility of a more adequate metaphysics. He came near at times without ever quite reaching the position which apprehended the significance of the fact that you must believe in free personality if life and the universe are to have any sort of true meaning. He never really saw the possibilities of a fully critical epistemology. Had he lived long enough, he might have become skeptical of that skepticism of the higher uses of reason which came near to bringing elements of contradiction into his own position. As it was, he insisted on being completely honest in facing all facts, those which had to do with the material and those which had to do with the moral and spiritual world. He insisted on using the mind for the seeing of the congruities and the incongruities of thought. And so at the end of his long journey his skepticism had become the friend of faith.

The last volume of the *New Shelburne Essays*, which was published in 1936, was entitled *On Being Human*. By this time Norman Foerster had published his striking and important symposium *Humanism and America*. It was now evident that a group

of able and earnest thinkers had come to positions which could be fitted into a general humanistic framework. It is of this volume that More writes his first essay, *A Revival of Humanism*. He finds things to praise and things to blame in the volume of which he writes. But he is glad to find a group of men who take their stand on being human, on being free persons responsible for what we make of life. The true humanist is not a foe of the good use of the imagination. He is a foe of eccentricity. The true humanist stands for a great affirmation which opens the really good life to men. And when he denies, he denies only for the sake of the great affirmation. You are not a foe of organic health because you reject poison. More objects to the affirmation that you can actually realize the good life without passing from humanism on to religion.

At this point he breaks a lance with Irving Babbitt, though he is careful to say that nothing in his argument is to indicate a rift between himself and his long-time comrade in arms. The essay on *Irving Babbitt* is a delightful piece of writing. There is happy personal reminiscence, and ample, though not uncritical, tribute.

The essay on *Proust* and the essay on *Joyce* show what a thorough study More made of typical writers who represent everything which he personally repudiated. Life without the quality of definitive choice is seen in its ultimate futility in *Proust* and *Joyce*. The study of lawless impulses with no controlling principle becomes a rather sickening process before one is through with it. And the turbid stream of the subconscious unmastered by clear and noble discipline leads to a strange valley of moral death. But every statement More makes is the result of such meticulous study as no one of his foes ever gave to his own writing. No unfriendly critic ever met More on his own level.

Religion and Social Discontent insists that we must not escape proper responsibility by blaming everything on society, and

that when religion falls victim to this fallacy, it ceases to be truly religion. More does not deny the existence of wrongs which must be righted. He pleads for a conservatism which is not sullen and unjust, but which would find orderly ways of dealing with the changes which must be made in the name of justice. When More comes to consider the Church and politics, he is anxious that the Church shall not make its political pronouncements from a position which is ready to say much of men's rights and little of their responsibilities. The Church must put genuine spiritual values into political actions. It must not make its politics a substitute for religious action, but rather an expression of the sacramental principle which would make the material—and indeed, all of life—the servant and the expression of the spiritual.

The study of Baron von Hügel is full of an almost tender appreciation. But he is unhesitating in his questions about the tendencies in Von Hügel's thought which would place the Deity beyond the reality of those experiences which give validity to his compassion for men.

The essay *On How to Read Lycidas* has all his faithful admiration for Milton. But here, too, there is a Milton who came to feel a hatred for authority—perhaps more than he felt the love of true liberty. The Milton who wanted to make his own life a true poem wrote the *Lycidas*. And we must free ourselves from the angry obsessions of his most bitter years as we read it.

V

The little book *Pages from an Oxford Diary* tells the whole story of Paul Elmer More's spiritual pilgrimage as a kind of hardly won confession of faith. With a certain spiritual modesty More imagines that he is an Oxford don, and puts the tale of his own intellectual and spiritual journeys into the writing of a wise old man who lives at the crossing of the Ox. But it is his own tale which he tells, and the book is his last personal word

to the world into which he had sent so many books. There is an air of gentle maturity and a quiet beauty of style about the book, a spiritual serenity and a sense of having reached a goal beyond the tempests which blow upon the mind of man, which will make it a spiritual classic. No other such book has come from an American pen.

You come to have a sense of all the stages of More's journey. There is the period of simple and happy childish faith. There is the period of eager emotional romanticism. There is the reaction to a stern and rationalistic skepticism. There is the period when the stern taste of the classicist is on the throne. There is the period of a convinced Platonist. And there is the period when the central stream of Platonism is seen to find its fulfillment in the faith of the Incarnation. In a sense you learn what is perhaps most important to know as you follow the tale of More's repudiations. He could not rest in a mechanistic view of the universe, and so he was saved from the obsessions of materialistic science. He could not rest in the destruction of all values and meanings, which is the goal of Hindu thought, and so he was saved from becoming a pantheistic monist. He could not rest in an abstract philosophy in which all events and purposes and all significance come to be parts of a vast abstraction, and so he was saved from a metaphysics which depletes life at the very moment when it professes to explain it.

The positive positions he reached mark the great stages of his journey. He found that he must believe in purpose. It became clear that purpose involved the presence of a person who possesses the purpose. In the ultimate universe this means the great person whose purpose gives the meaning and the goal of existence. He found that he must hold to the moral intuition of right and wrong as the center of everything else. He found that he must hold that thought must be used for the clarification of the deepest meaning of experience and not for the denial or the depletion of that meaning. Men are morally responsible. They are intel-

lectually impotent. The last phrase is unfortunate enough. But when one analyzes the meaning of More in using it, he may repudiate the phrase but he can accept heartily the thing More was trying to express.

It really comes to this: Formal logic must never be allowed to emasculate direct moral experience. When once More had come to see that purpose requires a person, and final purpose a final person, the journey of his mind quickened and new goals came into view. Revelation became understandable and real, and indeed inevitable. The Incarnation became the very consummation of the whole process of his thought. And his belief that the Word became flesh came to flower in worship, in the experience of that great sacrament in which he saw the flesh become the Word. He had passed beyond the region of doubt to the realm of secure faith. He was ready to declare that if he were young he would preach. And he so began to enter into the deeper and redemptive elements of the Christian religion that he was ready to use the words, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

VI

So in Paul Elmer More we see critical humanism finding its consummation in the Christian faith. He was one of the few men who could say quite simply, and with only the slightest touch of exaggeration, that he had read all the books which were worth reading. He had indeed listened to all the voices. And with astonishing intellectual patience he had tried to see what each word to which he listened meant to the man who uttered it. And so in intellectual apprehension he came very near to making the whole of human experience his own. There was plenty of mountain climbing. There were many precipitous crags. There were dizzy heights and there were forbidding depths. There were great dangers. And there were high hopes. At the end More had reached a place of lofty and commanding vision with vast vistas spread out before him. And it was with something of a

child's wonder that he looked upon the one Face which had become the greatest face of all to him.

As we have seen, it is possible for the friendly critic to find important work to do. The fashion in which Plato identified knowledge and virtue always impressed More too much, though he did raise questions. The fashion in which More himself made the philosophies of abstract absolutes synonymous with all metaphysics must be seen clearly. If he had found a metaphysic based upon the personality in which he came so deeply to believe, he would have found all the elements of his thought falling into proper place; and though he would have realized the tragic possibilities which came from the misuse of the reason, he would, I think, have dropped the phrase "intellectual incompetence." But while at certain places we would put somewhat differently based foundations under his work, in the deep movement of his thought and in the temple of faith which he built we will find ourselves essentially at one with him. To be sure, there will be those who cannot follow him in every detail of his ultimate high Anglican position. But they will understand the spiritual meanings he was attempting to express even if they cannot always make their own his form of words.

At bottom it was the faith of Paul Elmer More that if you listen to all the voices and trust in the moral use of the intelligence, you will not be led astray. It was this which made him a Christian humanist. The wise study of the very nature of man and of his deepest experience makes the journey toward a belief in God inevitable. Revelation itself would be impotent—and indeed impossible—if man's deepest life and struggles did not call with a great cry for that which revelation brings. And since God made man to understand the word when the word was given, and since the word was given to be understood by man, this mighty meeting of the human and the divine is itself a matter of the divine grace. And the Incarnation leads on to the mighty deed of suffering love upon the cross. So the grace of the Creator meets the grace of the Redeemer.

VII

In the *American Review* for November, 1936, a few months before More's death, a series of *Marginalia* from his pen was published. It is full of rich material, much of it of an autobiographical nature. It closes with three quotations.

One is from the *Agamemnon* of Aeschylus: "Sing woe, sing woe! but let the good overcome!"

The second is a sentence from the last words of Socrates as reported in the *Phaedo* of Plato: "Fair is the prize [of immortality] and the hope is great."

The third is the word of Jesus as he entered the valley of darkness: "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

The very selection of the quotations is revealing. We see the spiritual pilgrim coming to a good journey's end at last.

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